

Genesis 1

1. Verse 1 contains a simple statement, but its meaning is quite profound. What does this verse mean to you?

Why do you believe God created the heavens and the earth?

What views have you held or have you heard concerning creation?

2. The word for "created" in verse one is used only with God as the subject. It means to give birth to something new. What does it mean to you that only God is able to give birth to something new?

3. What two words in verse two are used to describe the earth?

What covered the earth?

What was the Spirit of God doing at this time?

What does this mean to you?

This verse mentions the earth but says that the Spirit of God was hovering over the water. What did the earth look like at this time?

4. With verse 3 we now read about the creation process. Use the following chart to describe this process.

What happened?	
Day 1	

Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	
Day 6	
Day 7	

5. Look again at the two words that were used to describe the earth in verse 2.
What do you notice about the first three days? About the last three days?

6. Read again verses 3 and 4. They tell us that God divided the light from the darkness. Looking at the chart above, what was created on day four?

What, then, was the light mentioned in verses 3 and 4?

7. What do these verses say about "seeds" and reproduction? What does this mean to you?
8. After God created the animals of the sea and the birds of the air, what did He do?

What does it mean to that God blessed them?

What did God "command" the animals to do?

9. Why do you think God created man last?

What does this mean to you personally?

10. What did God say after each day?

In what ways do you think God views His creation as being good?

In what ways do you think God views you as being good?

11. Read v. 26. God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...." Why do you think God said "our" image instead of "My" image?

What do you think God meant by His image?

In what way does this make man "special" or different from every other created thing?

12. What does God say man is to do in verse 26?

What does it mean to you that we are "to rule over" all the earth?

Are we fulfilling this responsibility? Please explain.

13. Verse 27 tells us that man is composed of both male and female. What do they have in common?

What does this mean for us today?

14. What instructions does God give to man in verse 28?

What does it mean to you that we are to "subdue" the earth? That we are to "rule" over every living creature?

Can you think of examples where we have abused or ignored this command?

15. What does God say about food in verses 29 and 30?

Some people use these verses to argue that we are to be vegetarians. Do you agree? Please explain?

16. What does God say about the sixth day of creation? How does it differ from what He said after the other days?

Why do you think God said this?

17. What have you learned about God and His creation from this chapter?

In what ways does all of creation testify to the greatness of God? What can you learn or what have you learned about God from His creation?

Genesis 2

1. Chapter 2 continues with the creation story. Chapter 1 covered the first six days of creation. What does verse 1 say about creation?

What does verse 2 say about creation?

How is the seventh day different from all the other days?

We know that God cannot become tired. Therefore, why do you believe God chose to rest on the seventh day?

What does verse 3 tell us God did in reference to the seventh day?

What significance does this hold for us today?

How easy or hard is it for you to rest? Please explain.

2. Many people argue that the creation story is not to be taken literally. It is a good story that shows us the character of God, but we should not take it as fact. How do you react to this statement?

What would you say to someone who thought this way?

Following verse 3, we see a break in the narration. We have read about the first seven days, and now, with verse 4, we take a more detailed look. We read about the creation as a narrative or a story as opposed to the day-by-day description in Chapter 1.

3. Read vv. 4 & 5. Describe the condition of the earth.

Why were there no plants?

4. According to verse 6, how did God water the earth?
5. Verse 7 talks about the creation of man. What new information do you learn from this verse that we did not learn from the account in chapter 1?

What is the major distinction between man and other living creatures?

What does it mean to you to have the breath of God in you?

6. Read vv. 8-9 about the Garden of Eden. What do we read about the garden in verse 8?

Why did God create the Garden of Eden?

What can we learn about the trees God planted in the garden?

Why would God plant trees that were pleasing to the eye?

What part or parts of creation do you find pleasing to the eye?

What does it mean to you that God created them for you?

What two trees did God place in the middle of the garden?

7. Read vv. 10-14. How did God water the Garden of Eden?

What are the names of the four rivers that found their source in the garden?

Using a map, can you locate any of these rivers? If so, where do you believe the Garden of Eden might have been located?

8. According to verse 15, why did God place man in the garden?

This is the first mention of work. Now the world was in perfect order. No sin had yet been committed. Yet, God gave Adam work. Why do you think God did this?

How important do you think it is for man to work? Can you find any other verses that relate to work?

9. Verses 16 & 17 contains God first spoken words to man. What did God say to Adam?

This command contains two parts: a permissive (what Adam can do) and a prohibitive (what Adam can't do). What was the permissive?

What was the prohibitive?

What can we learn from this command when relating to our children or to others?

10. What would be the result of Adam's eating from the tree of good and evil?

This may seem harsh, but this consequence shows us the result of disobeying God. Disobedience to God's commands results in what?

11. Read vv. 18-20. What does God say about man in verse 18?

Remember, man is created in the image of God; therefore, this is not a fault or mistake in man. What can we learn about ourselves from this statement?

As a result, God says He is going to make a helper suitable for Adam. What does this mean to you?

Other versions read a "help meet" or "help of his like" instead of helper. Remember why God was going to make this helper. What do you think a "help meet" is?

12. To help Adam see and understand his need, what did God do in verses 19-20?

What authority did God give to Adam?

Where do you think Adam came up with all the names for the animals?

13. As God brought the animals to Adam, what did Adam observe?

At the end, we read again that no suitable helper was found for Adam. What do you think Adam realized at this time?

We need to understand that Adam was not lonely; he may have been alone, but he was not lonely. He had all of creation and He had God to keep him company. Also, this was not a surprise to God. So, once again, why do you believe God was going to create woman?

14. Verses 21 & 22 talk about the creation of woman. Of all of created beings, woman's creation is unique. What makes her creation so unique?

Why do you believe God chose to create woman in this manner?

How did Adam meet the woman?

What can we learn about the relationship between man and woman from these verses?

What does it mean to you that God did not want man to be alone?

What would you say to someone who has chosen to remain single?

15. Verse 23 contains the first recorded words of Adam. What does he say about the woman God has given to him?

What does it mean to you when Adam says that woman is "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"?

How do you believe Adam viewed Eve?

How would you respond to someone who felt that women were inferior to men?

How would you respond to someone who felt that men were inferior to women?

16. Verse 24 contains the first reference to marriage. At this point, are Adam and Eve married? Please explain.

If you believe they are, who gave Eve away and who performed the marriage?

What does it mean to you that the man is to leave his father and mother? Does this apply to the woman as well?

Why would God want the man to leave his father and mother?

What does it mean to you that through marriage, a man and a woman become one flesh?

17. Why do you believe the LORD included verse 25?

Some people use this verse to condone or justify nudist colonies. What would you say to them?

Genesis 3

Chapter 3 covers the introduction of sin into God's creation. As we discussed in Chapter 2, God created us with the freedom to make choices. Every person has faced and will face the situation described in this chapter.

1. What can you learn about the serpent from verse 1?

Different translations use the words crafty, cunning, shrewd, and subtle to describe the serpent. What do these words mean to you?

What can you learn about sin from these words?

2. What did the serpent ask the woman?

What does it mean to you when someone begins a question, "Did John or Brian or Wendy really say...."?

What is the serpent's intention by opening his question with "Did God really say..."?

Have you ever had anyone question God's word like this to you? If so, how did you respond?

3. Before we go any further, we need to realize that this is the first temptation. What does it mean to you to be tempted?

Read carefully James 1:13-15. What does James say about temptation?

Is being tempted a sin? Please explain.

Describe the process outlined in these verses?

4. Now read I Corinthians 10:13. What does this verse tell us about being tempted?

Why would God allow us to be tempted?

What do you think Paul meant by a means of escape?

Can you share a time when God made known to you a way of escape from temptation?

5. Now, let's return to Genesis. What is the serpent tempting Eve to do?

How does the serpent twist God's word?

Is Satan still trying to twist God's word today? If so, can you think of any examples?

How does Eve answer the serpent's question?

6. This is important. Compare what Eve reported God said to what God actually said. Do you notice any differences? If so, what?

Does this seem important to you?

What does the Bible say about adding or taking away from the word of God? (See Matthew 3:18)

7. In verse 4, Satan tries another tactic. He calls God a liar. What does he tell Eve?

He also says that Adam and Eve will be just like God. In what way?

What emotion is the serpent trying to stir up in Eve?

Eve has not eaten of the fruit yet, but does she know right from wrong? Please explain.

Is the world still trying to convince us that the result of sin is not as bad as God says it is? Can you think of an example?

8. When we read verse 6, we can see that temptation usually begins with the eyes. What does this say Eve did?

What caught Eve's attention concerning the fruit? (Notice, we do not know what the fruit was. Tradition has led us to believe it was an apple, but we do not know.)

Once Eve saw that the fruit was pleasing to the eye, what did she do?

Compare what is happening to Eve to what we read in James 1:13-15 in question 3. Does it follow this pattern?

What can we learn about temptation and sin from these verses?

9. Where was Adam when Eve was being tempted and when she eventually ate the fruit?

Once Eve ate of the fruit, what did she do?

Do we usually want to involve others in our sinful behaviors? If so, why do we tend to do this?

10. How does the Bible refer to Adam in verse 6?

When were Adam and Eve married?

As her husband, what should Adam have done?

11. What was the result of their eating the fruit? In other words, what affect did their sin have on their relationship with each other?

On their relationship with God?

Why do you think they made clothes for themselves?

12. What do you think it means when the Bible tells us Adam and Eve heard the sound of God walking in the garden?

Why had God come to the garden?

What did they do when they heard God?

Now we see another result of sin. It causes us to draw away from God and "hide" from Him. Is it possible to hide from God?

13. What does God call out in verse 9?

Does this mean that God does not know what Adam and Eve have done?

If God knows, why would He call out, "Where are you"?

Can you recall a time when God may have asked you this question?

14. How did Adam answer God?

What did Adam say that revealed to God that Adam had sinned?

We can see from this example that we can never sin and "get away" with it. How does this make you feel?

15. When reading verse 12, it seems like Adam has finally learned his lesson. What did Adam say when God specifically asked him if he had eaten the forbidden fruit?

But, then, what else does Adam say?

According to Adam, who was at fault?

16. God now turns to the woman and asks her what she has done. How does the woman respond?

According to her, who was at fault?

Was Eve really tricked into eating the fruit? Please explain.

Sin always results in consequences, and those consequences can affect "innocent" people. Now we are going to see the consequences of Adam's and Eve's sin, consequences which are still evident today.

17. First, the LORD turns to the serpent. What judgment does God pronounce upon the serpent?

What does verse 15 mean to you?

18. What judgment does God pronounce upon the woman?

What does it mean to you that the woman will desire her husband but the husband will rule over her?

19. What judgment does God pronounce upon the man?

20. Are we still seeing the results of these judgments today? Please explain.

21. In verse 17, we read that God begins Adam's punishment with the words, "Because you listened to your wife...." Some interpret this verse to mean that the husband should not listen to his wife. Is this what God meant?

Do you agree? Please explain.

22. It is at this point that we learn that Adam named the woman Eve. What does Eve mean?

23. Without reading or knowing the rest of the story, how would you expect God to act toward Adam and Eve?

What does God do?

Where did God get the skins to make them clothes?

What does this mean God had to do?

Why would God make Adam and Eve clothes?

Even though Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sinned, God did not turn His back on them and He never stopped loving them. What does this mean to you?

24. Next we see a great act of mercy from God. What does it mean to you for God to be merciful?

According to verse 21, what does God do?

Why do you believe God did this instead of just throwing Adam and Eve out of the garden?

What did God have to do in order to make clothes for Adam and Eve?

25. Read vv. 22 & 23. Why did God banish them from the Garden of Eden?

According to these verses, what do you believe God intended for man?

26. What did God do to ensure that man would not return to the Garden?

27. After studying this chapter, in your opinion, was the greatest consequence of Adam's and Eve's disobedience?

Even though we have read only three chapters, if someone asked you why he/she should read Genesis, what would you tell him/her?

Genesis 4

The story of Genesis now turns to life outside the garden. We see the first man and woman become the first family, and we see the further affects of sin upon our relationships.

1. Once again, we have no indication of how much time has passed. In verse 1, we learn that Adam slept with his wife. Other versions read lay or knew her. From this we can see that God intended sex to be part of marriage. Do you agree with this interpretation? Please explain.

2. The Bible tells us that after Eve gave birth to Cain, she gave thanks to God saying that she gave birth with God's help. What does this mean to you?

Who was Adam and Eve's second son?

According to verse 2 what was different about the two brothers?

3. Verse 3 tells us that in the course of time, Cain and Abel brought offerings to the LORD. What does "in the course of time" mean to you?

Why do you believe the brothers brought an offering?

Should we still be bringing offerings to the LORD? Please explain.

4. What did Cain bring to the LORD?

What did Abel bring?

How did God respond to Cain's offering?

To Abel's offering?

5. What was Cain's reaction to God's response?

The Bible tells us that as a result, Cain's countenance fell. What does this mean to you?

What is so wrong with Cain's becoming very angry with the Lord?

6. Verse 6 records God's words to Cain. What does God ask Cain?

If God knows all things, why do you believe God asks Cain this question?

What does God advise Cain to do?

What does it mean to you that sin is crouching at the door?

How can doing what is right close the door to sin?

What do you believe is the "right" that Cain is to do?

7. What does verse 7 reveal about the nature of sin?

How are we to react to sin?

Once again we see the destructive nature of sin. It destroys relationships, with God and with those we love. Do you agree with this statement? Please explain.

8. Read verses 7 & 8. What do you believe Cain chose to do or not to do?

Why do you think Cain asked Abel to go to the field with him?

Here we read of the first sibling rivalry, the first act of violence, and the first murder. Why do you think Cain killed his brother?

9. Now we read of another exchange between God and Cain. Again, God asks Cain questions. Once again, why does God ask Cain where Abel is?

What is Cain's response?

What does it mean to be your brother's keeper?

How did God "know" that Cain had killed Abel?

What does it mean to you that Abel's blood cried out to the LORD?

10. What was Cain's punishment?

According to Cain's words, what was the worst part of this punishment?

Of what was Cain afraid?

What does God decide to do to ease Cain's fear?

Why do you believe God did not take Cain's life?

11. Where did Cain go to live?

What does the name mean?

12. After reading what Cain said to God, do you think Cain "learned his lesson" and changed? Please explain.

13. What was the name of Cain's first born son?

What can you learn about his son?

14. Verses 17-22 talk about the genealogy of Cain. Why do you think the LORD put this in the Bible?

Did anything in the genealogy grab your attention?

What does it mean to you that one son was the father of those who raised livestock and another was the father of those who played the flute?

15. What is unusual about Lamech?

16. This is the first instance of polygamy. Some people argue God is not against polygamy because we do not read that God showed any disapproval. However, what does God's word say about marriage? (See Genesis 2:24)

What does Jesus teach about marriage? (See Matthew 19:3-6.)

17. What exactly did Lamech tell his wives?

What do you think he means when he said if Cain would be avenged seven times, then he would be avenged seventy-seven times?

18. Adam and Eve have another son. What was his name?

The last part of verse 26 tells us that at that time, men began to call upon the name of the LORD. What does this mean to you?

What is the significance of the chapter ending with this statement considering we have read about the first murder?

Genesis 5

This chapter lists the genealogy of Adam and Eve. Many people have a tendency to read over all these names and "begats" but it is a chapter worth reading. We will not have many questions, so please read through each verse and ask your own questions to see what the LORD will teach us.

1. What does verse 1 say about this chapter?

Why do you think it is important to write down our genealogy?

Is your genealogy written down?

2. What does verse 2 say about creation?
3. Verse 3 tells us that Adam had a son in his own likeness, in his own image. What does this mean to you? (Again, look at verse 2.)

What significance does this hold for every child born?

4. Why do you believe people lived so long at this time?
5. In this chapter, we find the oldest person in history. Who was it?
6. For each person, except one, what phrase follows the number of years lived?

Of all those listed in this chapter, which one's name is not followed by this phrase?

What does the Bible say about this man?

What does it mean to you that God took him away?

What does it mean to you that he walked with God?

7. What did Noah's father say about Noah when Noah was born?

What does the name "Noah" mean?

How old was Noah when he had children?

8. Did you learn anything from this chapter? If so, what?

Why would suggest people read this chapter instead of skipping it?

Genesis 6

Now we begin studying one of the most well-known episodes of the Bible, the story of Noah. Let us pray that God will give us additional insight to this account.

1. Do you really think it makes a difference as to how you live your life? Please explain.

Does it make a difference even when no one is watching? If so, what difference?

If someone asked you to explain why they should “live right” according to the Bible, what would you tell them?

2. What do we find happening in verse 1?

Why do you think the verse specifically mentions the fact that daughters were born to men?

3. Now, verse 2 has generated much discussion. What two groups are mentioned in verse 2?

What is going on between these two groups?

Why do you think this action did not please God?

According to your commentaries, who are the sons of God? (Note, there are two main interpretations.)

Who were the daughters of men?

What was the result of these two groups intermarrying?

What does the New Testament say about this? (See 2 Cor. 6:14, for example.)

From these verses we can learn something about a believer marrying an unbeliever. According to these verses, what is usually the result?

4. God looks at His creation in verse 3. What does He see and what does He say about man?

What does it mean to you when God says He will not strive or contend with man forever?

What implication does this hold for us today?

What decision does God make as a result of man's evil intentions?

Why do you believe God made this particular decision?

5. What are some of the changes that have taken place in God's creation during these opening chapters?

How has God's attitude and/or actions changed toward His creation?

6. Who are the Nephilim mentioned in verse 4?

What can you learn about them from this verse?

Can you find other references to the Nephilim in the Bible?

Briefly describe what you think the earth was like at this time.

7. Verse 5 says God looked at the earth and saw how great man's wickedness had become. Read vv. 5-13. Describe what God saw.

In what ways does our world today parallel Noah's time? Be as specific as possible.

How did this affect God? (See v. 6.)

How does it strike you to know that God can be grieved?

Does this mean God made a mistake? Please explain.

How do you think God feels when He looks upon the earth today?

8. What does God decide to do?

How do you think this made God feel?

9. In the midst of all this evil, we find Noah. What do verse 8 & 9 say about Noah?

What does it mean to you that Noah found favor with God?

How do you think Noah managed to stay blameless in such a sinful world?

Does being blameless mean Noah did not sin?

How can we remain righteous in today's world? How can we encourage others to do the same?

10. Now comes one of the greatest commissions in the Bible. Read carefully what God says to Moses and then summarize what God says verse by verse. What does God say to Noah in verse 13?

In verse 14?

In verse 15?

In verse 16?

In verse 17?

In verse 18?

In verse 19?

In verse 20?

In verse 21?

11. One interesting fact before we continue. Divide the length by the width. Therefore, what is the ratio of the ark?

This ratio of 1:6 (length being 6 times the width) is the same ration used by modern shipbuilders. What does this mean to you?

12. If you had been Noah, what would have been the hardest or most challenging part of this commission?

13. If you can draw, please make a picture of what you believe the completed ark would have looked like. If you can't, see if you can find a picture.

Does the picture match what you thought the ark would look like?

Notice, the ark has no means of power, no sails or rudder. Why?

14. What covenant does God make with Noah?

What is a covenant?

What covenant has God made with us?

15. Verse 22 is an amazing verse. Look again at Noah's world and at his commission. What was Noah's response?

What does this tell you about Noah?

How do you think Noah developed this close relationship with God?

16. What has this chapter meant to you?

17. How have people today reacted to the church's declaration that God does not overlook the sin of our nation?

What should we do?

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Genesis 7

Finally, after 100 years, Noah hears the LORD say, "Go into the ark." How do you think Noah felt?

Imagine you have been waiting upon a promise of the LORD for a long time. People have called you foolish, but you kept believing. How might you feel when the LORD finally told you it was time?

Have you ever felt "foolish" working for the LORD while others were trying to convince you to give up? If so, what made you keep going?

Whom does God tell Noah to take with him?

Why has God chosen to save Noah and his family?

What does it mean to you to be found righteous in God's eyes?

When God looks at us today, does He find us righteous? (See Romans 3:21-22.)

Now come the specifics about the animals. How many pairs of clean animals are they to take?

Why are they to take so many pairs of clean animals?

What is a "clean" animal?

How many pairs of unclean animals were they to take?

What are some unclean animals?

Can you find any information as to how many animals could have been on the ark?

Verse 4 tells us that Noah had a seven day "warning" before God sent rain. Why do you think God did this?

What was happening during these seven days?

Suppose you were one of Noah's neighbors who thought this man was a nut. Then, all of a sudden, animals start arriving. What would you think?

What does it mean to you that even after these seven days, no one approached Noah and sought God's forgiveness?

Suppose something like this happened today. Do you think people would "see" God and repent or continue living their lives as they wished? Please explain.

Now, considering how these people were, what does it mean to you that Noah remained a righteous man?

Again we read that Noah did all that the LORD had commanded. Why do you believe it is difficult for people to obey God's commandments?

What are your feelings about displaying God's commandments in schools and courthouses?

What is the difference between displaying them and obeying them?

How old was Noah when the flood came?

How long had Noah been building the ark?

According to verse 7, how many people entered the ark? Who were they?

The next few verses once again tell us about the animals that entered the ark. Why do you believe the Bible repeats this information?

Read carefully verse 9. What does it say about the animals?

Noah did not have to round up the animals. They came to him and entered the ark. Why did they do this?

What does it mean to you that all these animals obeyed God?

Read vv. 10-12. What were the floodwaters?

Until this time, no rain had fallen upon the ground. How was everything watered?

The seven days could be considered a period of grace before the floods came. What does this mean to you?

How would you respond to people who assert that the earth does not contain enough water to flood the entire earth or that there is no proof of a world-wide flood? (See Genesis 1:9-10.)

Verse 13 tells us that on the day the rains began, Noah, his sons, and their wives entered the ark. The next few verses once again tell us that all the animals were with them. Who shut Noah, his family, and all the animals in the ark?

What does this mean to you?

Read vv 17-20. What other details do we read about the flood?

Several times we read that the waters rose greatly. What does this mean to you?

What do these verses tell us about the extent of the flood?

What is the significance of verse 20?

Read vv. 21-23. Each verse says the same thing. What do they tell us?

Why do you believe God repeats this fact three times?

Why do you believe God included all living creatures when man was at fault?

Lest there be any question, according to verse 23, who was left alive on the face of the earth?

Again, remember the seven days of grace and now the utter destruction of all live. What do these two facts show us about God and His nature?

How long did the waters flood the earth?

For some, the story of Noah is just that: a story. After looking at this chapter in detail, what do you think about this account of Noah and the flood?

What have you learned from this chapter?

The story of Noah has another purpose. In Matthew 24, Jesus' disciples ask Him about the end of the age. They want to know what His second coming will be like. In answering their question, Jesus refers to Noah and the times of Noah. Read Matthew 24:30-45. In what way will Jesus' second coming be like the flood?

What do these verses mean to you?

What has studying Noah taught you about these times?

Remembering Noah, what should we be doing?

Genesis 8

1. Verse 1 contains an interesting phrase. According to *Genesis 7:24*, the waters rose and the rains came for 150 days. For 5 months, Noah and his family find themselves in the midst of the storm. What might you have been thinking or feeling during this time?

Can you remember a time when it seemed God had forgotten about you or your situation? If so, how did you feel?

Now, verse 1 says that God remembered Noah. What does this mean to you? Is it possible for God to forget? Please explain.

What does it mean to you to wait upon the LORD?

Once again, Noah and his family are the only people living. What does it mean to you that after 150 days, God remembered Noah and the animals?

2. What did God decide to do?

What was the result?

What does verse 2 tell us?

3. Verse 3 tells us that the water receded steadily. Do you think Noah was aware of this?

Are there times when God is at work, yet we can't "see" that? Please explain.

What does this mean to you?

4. When did the ark come to rest on the mountains of Ararat?

How long had Noah and his family and the animals been in the ark? (See *Genesis 7:11.*)

What might have been their reaction when they felt the ark stop moving?

How much longer did it take for the tops of the mountains to become visible?

How difficult might it have been to remain in the ark once you knew the water was receding?

5. After waiting another 40 days, what does Noah do?

Why do you think Noah first sent out a raven, an unclean bird?

What did the raven do?

The Bible does not say that the raven returned to the ark? Why did it not? (Note: what can you learn about the raven?)

Noah then sent out a dove. What did it do?

Why do you think it returned when the raven did not?

6. Noah waited another 7 days and sent another dove out. What happened this time?

How do you think Noah felt upon seeing the olive leaf?

For what is the olive branch a symbol? Please explain.

What hope do you think was rising up in Noah and his family?

After 7 more days what happened?

7. Verse 13 tells us that finally the water had receded and the earth dried up. How long had Noah been in the ark?

Earlier we read that God had shut them in the ark. Now we read that Noah removed the covering himself. Why?

What do you think it means that he removed the covering?

Yet, notice. Did Noah come out of the ark? Please explain.

8. What does God tell Noah in verse 15?

How difficult would it be for you to remain in the ark, under a beautiful blue sky, until God told you to come out?

What does this tell us about Noah?

Can you think of a time when God opened a door for you but asked you to wait before going through it?

9. What does Noah do when he leaves the ark?

Why do you believe this was the first thing Noah did?

We have talked about giving thanks in all situations. For what do you think Noah was thankful?

This is the first mention of an altar. Where do you think Noah got the idea for building an altar and making a sacrifice?

10. How did the LORD react to Noah's sacrifice?

What do you think it means that the LORD smelled the sweet or pleasing aroma?

In what way or ways can we present a pleasing sacrifice to God? (See Eph. 5:2.)

What does the LORD say in verse 21?

Read the verse using different translations. Do you notice anything different?

What does this tell us about God?

What significance does it hold for us today?

11. What additional promise does God make in verse 22?

Again, what does this mean to you?

12. This is the first covenant God made with man. How would you define "covenant"?

In your own words, what is this covenant?

Is it still in affect? Please explain.

Genesis 9

1. God is ready to begin again. He blesses Noah and his sons by speaking over them. What does this tell you about the words we speak?

In what ways can you bless someone through your speech?

What does God tell Noah and his sons in verse 1?

Where have we heard these “instructions” before?

What does this tell you about God and about His word?

2. What does verse 2 say about man’s relationship with the rest of creation?

What does it mean to you that the animals will fear and dread man?

How is this command similar and different from the one given to Adam in Genesis 1:28?

In other words, how did the relationship between man and the rest of creation change when Adam and Eve disobeyed God?

According to this verse, exactly what has been given into man’s hands?

What meaning does this have for us today? What is our responsibility toward animals?

3. What does God tell Noah in verse 3?

What does it mean to you that God gave them everything for food?

Compare this verse to Genesis 1:29-30. What differences do you notice?

How do you account for these differences? (Again, look at God's words at the beginning of verse 2.)

Some people believe that eating meat is wrong in God's eyes because of His words to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1. How would you respond to this belief?

4. Because God now gave man animals as food, a new commandment has been added. What is that commandment? (See verse 4.)

What does it mean to you that we are not to eat meat with its lifeblood still in it?

To help us understand better what the LORD means when He talks about "lifeblood", let's look at Leviticus 3:17 and Leviticus 17:10-14. According to these verses, what do you believe is meant by lifeblood?

According to these verses in Leviticus, why has blood been given to man?

God is very clear. The life of a creature is in its blood. Now read Hebrews 9:22. What does this verse mean to you?

What do these verses on lifeblood and the shedding of blood have to do with Jesus Christ?

Why did Jesus have to die on the cross and shed His blood?

5. What does God mean when He says He will demand an accounting for someone's lifeblood?

Verse 5 adds that God will demand an accounting from every animal. What does this mean to you? (See Exodus 21:28-32.)

God says He will demand the same for each man. What does this mean to you?

Remember what happened when Cain slew Abel. How did God know Cain had killed his brother?

6. Read verse 6. God makes His point very clear. What is to happen to someone who sheds another person's blood?

In the last part of this verse, God explains why He demands a life for a life. Why does He?

What implication does this hold for us?

7. God ends this section by once again encouraging Noah and repeating His desire for Noah and his family. What does God tell him?

8. In verses 8-10, God says He will establish His covenant with Noah and his descendants. What is a covenant?

How is a covenant different from a contract?

What does it mean to you that this is God's covenant that He makes with us?

God goes even further. Who or what else is included in this covenant?

Why do you believe God made this covenant with every living creature on the earth?

What does it mean to you that birds, cattle, dogs, etc. have a covenant with God?

9. Beginning in verse 11, God begins to state the parts of this covenant. What is the first part of this covenant?

Who is responsible for keeping this part of the covenant?

The second part of the covenant is actually stated in Genesis 8:22. What does this verse promise?

10. In verse 12, God tells us that He will give us a sign of this covenant. Why do you believe God gave us a sign?

Marriage is a covenant. What is the sign of that covenant? What is the purpose of that sign?

Christ tells us that He has made a new covenant with us. What is the sign of our new covenant with Jesus?

What is the sign of God's covenant with Noah and with all of creation?

When was the last time you stopped to look at a rainbow?

11. In verse 14, God tells us that He is the One Who brings the clouds over the earth. What do you believe this means?

Then in verse 15, God tells us that when His rainbow appears, He will remember His covenant. What do you think God means when He says He will remember? Do you think God would forget?

12. Verse 16 tells us that this covenant with Noah is an everlasting covenant. What is an everlasting covenant?

What have you learned from these verses about God and His covenants?

13. Once again God gives the names of those who survived the flood. Who were they?

Why do you believe God mentions their names once again?

What does verse 19 mean to you?

Have you ever given much thought to the truth that you are a descendant of one of Noah's sons?

14. Now begins another interesting story concerning Noah. Read verse 20 very carefully. If possible, read different translations. What does it say about Noah?

Why is it significant that Noah might have been the first person to plant a vineyard?

Keeping this in mind, how do you explain Noah's getting drunk in verse 21?

Noah was drunk, but he was not a drunkard. Please explain.

What happened as a result of Noah's getting drunk?

15. We do not need to go into great detail here, but we should understand that to see someone uncovered was a shameful act. God later instructs His priests not to allow anyone to see their nakedness.

What happens as Noah lay drunk and naked in his tent?

What did Ham do then?

16. What was so wrong with Ham's telling his brothers that he saw their father's nakedness?

What does this tell you about Ham's character?

Why does verse 22 read, "Ham, the father of Canaan..."? In other words, why does it mention Ham's son Canaan?

Is it possible that the son is like the father? Please explain.

17. What did Shem and Japheth do?

What do their actions tell us about these two sons?

What does it mean to you to cover someone's nakedness?

18. Next, Noah does something that has great ramifications. What does he do when he finds out what Ham had done?

Noah is prophesying at this point. What does it mean to you when someone is prophesying?

What does Noah say concerning Canaan?

What does Noah say concerning Shem?

What does Noah say concerning Japheth?

19. What can you find out about the descendants of Canaan?

Did they become the lowest of slaves to their brothers' descendants?

20. What do these verses teach us about honoring or dishonoring our parents?

What can they teach us about blessing or cursing our children?

21. What do you think it would have been like to live for 950 years?

What are some of the things Noah saw during the last 600 years of his life?

Genesis 10

At first glance, one might choose to skip this chapter because it appears to be nothing more than a list of names that many do not recognize. What significance can this hold for us? Why is this even in the Bible?

In this chapter, God shows us how the world was repopulated. We read about the beginnings of 70 nations that shape our world today. The *Explorer's Study Bible* states, "The evident purpose of this chapter is to show, through an ethnographical chart (the systematic recording of human cultures), the working of God's providence in fulfillment of the prophecy to Noah. These facts, covering such a great length of time, have been rigidly put to the test by historical scientists. Modern archaeologists have found histories and monuments, buried for centuries, that have confirmed this Biblical chart as a valid historical statement. Thus the "Table of Nations," that lists seventy nations of the world, is unique in ancient literature. Its purpose is to show how the world was repeopled after the flood by the descendants of Noah."

1. The first three verses mention Noah's three sons. These verses mark the beginning of the birth of nations. From this we can deduce that every nation on earth can be traced back to one of these brothers. What does this mean to you?

Notice, the nations are not divided by race or creed or nationality. Instead, how are they divided? (See verse 5.)

How did we come to divide people by race? Is this a Biblical approach? Please explain.

2. Verse 5 mentions maritime or seafaring peoples. From which brother are they descended?

3. Verse 8 mentions Nimrod. Who was he?

From which brother was he descended?

What cities did he build?

Have you heard of any of them? If so, which ones?

What can you tell about Nimrod from the fact that he built so many cities?

Many of these cities are in modern day Iraq. Does this hold any significance for us today? Please explain.

4. Can you find from which brother Abraham and thus Israel was descended?

What did Noah pronounce over this brother? (See chapter 9.)

5. Read verses 25 & 31 & 32. Once again, how were the nations divided?

Why do you believe God "separated" the nations?

Genesis 11

1. Verse 1 gives a brief description of the world as it existed after Noah. What does it say about the world?

What do you think the world would be like today if we all spoke the same tongue?

Find the land of Shinar on a map? In what present day country is it located?

What did the people decide to do?

What were their building materials?

2. Many people have heard of the tower of Babel. However, in verse 4, what are the people building?

What do you think they meant when they said they wanted to build a "tower that reaches to the heavens"?

Might this have anything to do with the flood? Please explain.

All through the Bible, God tells us that the heart is the key. Now let's look at these people's hearts. Why did they want to build the city and the tower?

Let's look more carefully at their reasons. First, they said they wanted to make a name for themselves. Is there anything wrong with this? If so, please explain. (Look at Psalm 73:6 and Proverbs 16:18.)

Are people still trying to make names for themselves through their own accomplishments? Please give some examples.

Have you tried or are you trying to build a name for yourself?

How can we keep human achievements from becoming monuments to man? For example, how can we keep this church building from becoming a source of pride and a monument to ourselves?

Now look at Matthew 7:24-27. What do Jesus' words have to do with this story of Babel?

Their second reason for building the city was to keep them from being "scattered over the face of the whole earth". What is wrong with this reason? (Look at Genesis 9:7).

3. Verse 5 is very interesting. What does it mean to you that God came down to see what the city was like?

To whom is the LORD speaking when He says "us" in verse 6?

Does God still come down to "look" at what we are doing? Please explain.

What does God say about the people?

4. What does it mean for people to abide in unity?

Read Psalm 133. What does this Psalm mean to you?

Read Matthew 17:20-23. Why do you believe Jesus prayed this prayer?

How important was it to Jesus that we be unified?

Read Romans 15:5-6. How do these scriptures tie to the story of Babel?

What can we do to work together in unity so that nothing would be impossible for us through Christ Jesus?

What can you do?

5. This passage shows us that man's attempts to achieve unity will not succeed. Yet, God wants us to dwell together in unity. How can we achieve unity in Christ without becoming prideful?
6. What does God decide to do to prevent them from accomplishing their objective?

What does it mean to you that God confused their language?

Why would this cause the people to scatter?

7. Look at verse 6. How does this verse relate to God's instructions to Adam and Eve and to Noah and his family?
8. The city was thereafter called "Babel". What does "Babel" mean?

Again, where is the present-day location of Babel?

In what way or ways are we still seeing men building monuments to themselves that they might be like God?

In what way or ways are we still seeing confusion reign in this area?

How can this area be changed or can it? Please explain.

What does it mean to you that events thousands of years ago are still affecting us today?

9. Beginning with verse 10, we see a shift from the families of the earth to one family. Whose family?

Why do you believe God has moved from all the families of the earth to this one family?

Read vv. 10-26. Trace the lineage of Shem.

Before we leave this genealogy, let's look at a few interesting things. At about what age did people have children?

What do you notice about the lifespan of Shem's descendants?

10. This genealogy ends with Terah. Who was he?

Do you notice anything different about him? If so, please explain.

Verse 26 lists his three sons. Usually, sons are listed from the oldest to the youngest, but not in this case. (Let's do a little math.)

How old was Terah when he became a father for the first time?

How old was Terah when he died? (See verse 32.)

Later, we read that Abram was 75 when Terah died and Abram left for Canaan. Therefore, how old was Terah when Abram was born?

If Abram was not the oldest, why do you believe he is mentioned first?

11. In verse 28, we learn that Terah was from what land?

Where is the modern day location of Ur?

What can you learn about the worship practices of the people in Ur?

According to verse 31, where was Terah taking his family?

Whom did Terah take with him?

Where did Terah stop and settle down?

Why do you believe he did not continue his journey to Canaan?

12. Who was Abram's wife?

These verses say very little about Abram's wife with one exception. What do we learn about her in verse 30?

How do you think this made Sarai feel? (Look again at God's instructions to Adam and Eve and to Noah.)

Why do you think God included this piece of information?

What can we learn about Abram from this?

13. Can you think of a reason why the place Terah settled would be named Haran?

Genesis 12

This chapter addresses the call of Abram. The last time we "heard" God speak to someone in this way was to Noah. Let us look at the call of Abram in more detail.

1. What does it mean to you to receive a call from God?

Do you believe God still "calls" people?

2. This is God's covenant with Abram. According to this covenant, what was Abram supposed to do?

If you had received this call, what would have been the most difficult part for you? Why?

Read "the call" once again. Does God mention a timetable? Did God mention one to Noah? What does this mean to you?

In what way does God still call us out of our "native country"?

3. Now, read verses 2 and 3 very carefully. They explain to us God's part of the covenant. What does God say he will do for Abram? (Note, list each promise.)

Based upon what we have studied about covenants, do you believe this covenant is still in effect? Please explain.

If it still is, what implications does verse 3 hold for us today?

What can we learn about God when we realize that a promise God made to one man thousands of years can still affect us today?

What about the promises God has made to you?

4. Verse 4 begins with "So Abram left...." What can you learn about Abram from the word "so"?

Why do you believe there is no record of Abram's questioning or hesitating before leaving?

What does it mean to you to believe God?

Read Hebrews 11:8-12. What do these verses say about Abraham?

What can we learn about Abram from the fact that he did just what the LORD had told him?

5. Whom did Abram take with him?

Why do you believe we are told that Abram was 75 years old?

6. Using a map or another source of information, how far did Abram and Sarai have to travel before they reached the Promised Land?

What are we told about this journey?

Why do you think we are not told more about the trip?

7. Upon reaching the promised land, where does Abram stop?

What modern day city rests at the home that Abram left?

What is happening in this city today?

What modern day city rests at the Biblical site of Shechem?

What is happening in this city today?

With this in mind, what can we learn about today's events from yesterdays' events?

8. What happened when Abram arrived in the promised land?

What did the LORD tell Abram? Notice, who is to inherit the land?

Who are Abram's offspring?

What did Abram do when God appeared to him?

9. Read verses 8 & 9. What did Abram do?

What does it mean to you that Abram called upon the name of the LORD?

At this point, how would you describe Abram?

Abraham then sets out for the Negev. What and where is the Negev?

10. Abram and Sarai now head to Egypt because of a severe famine. This is not the only time God will use a natural disaster to "move" people. Can you think of a modern day example of God's doing this?

Abram and Sarai obeyed God. They left their home and went to a foreign land. When they arrive, the land is experiencing a severe famine. Might this cause you to doubt God's plan? Please explain.

Why would God have them travel to the promised land, tell Abram it will belong to his descendants, and then have them leave for Egypt?

11. Now we get a closer look into Abram's character. As they approach Egypt, what does Abram ask his wife to do?

Why does he do this? (See verse 13.)

What does this tell us about Abram?

Look carefully at Abram's reasoning. How old is Sarai? What does this tell us about her?

Also, read 20:12. What can we learn about Abram and Sarai?

12. What happened to them when they arrived in Egypt?

What did Sarai do? Why did she do this?

What happened to Abram? (See verse 16.)

13. Abram's plan seems to be working. If it is allowed to play out, what is likely to happen to Sarai?

What would this do to God's plan?

In order to preserve the covenant He made with Abram, what does God do to protect Sarai?

Does this seem fair? Please explain.

14. Finally, Pharaoh has had enough, and he sends for Abram. What does he ask Abram?

How do you think Pharaoh found out that Sarai was Abram's wife?

What does Pharaoh decide to do?

What instructions does he give concerning this nomadic couple?

What do you think Sarai was feeling?

15. At this point, how would you describe Abram?

How would you describe Sarai?

Despite Abram's failings, God does not "discard" him. What does this teach us?

Genesis 13

1. After spending some time in Egypt, Abram returns to the Negev. Who was with him?

Verse 2 tells us that he had become very wealthy in livestock. Why do you think livestock was a measure of wealth during this time?

We also hear for the first time that gold and silver were a part of his wealth. Where do you think he got the gold and silver?

How do you believe Abram became so wealthy?

2. Next, we read that Abram traveled from place to place. Why do you believe he moved around so much?

Eventually, where do Abram and his family find themselves?

What does Abram do?

Has Abram been traveling "in circles"? Please explain.

3. When Abram went to Egypt to escape the famine, Lot was not mentioned. Why?

What do we learn about Lot in verse 5?

How or why do you believe Lot became so wealthy?

4. What problem arose at this time, according to verse 6?

What else added to the problem? (See verse 7.)

Abram more or less adopted Lot. How do you explain the quarreling that broke out between their two families?

How could God's blessings today cause quarreling in the body of Christ? Please explain.

Have you seen such quarreling? If so, how can we avoid it?

Also, verse 7 mentions that the Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. Why is this important? How does this fact add to the problem between Abram and Lot?

5. As the elder and as the one to whom God had given this land, Abram had the right to send Lot away. Instead, what does Abram say to Lot?

What does Abram decide to do?

What seems to be the most important thing to Abram?

How willing would you be to let someone "under" you make the decision that would affect your future?

What does this action reveal about the character of Abram?

How has Abram changed from when he first entered Canaan?

What can we learn from Abram about settling quarrels?

6. Abram tells Lot that they should separate. Why do you believe Abram made this statement?

Can you think of a reason why "family" should separate? Please explain.

In what way or ways is Abram like the father in the parable of the prodigal son?

In allowing Lot to choose what land he wanted, it seems Abram is settling for second best. However, he is not. Why?

Lot is given the first choice. How does Lot make his decision?

What does this reveal about Lot? (Look carefully at v. 11.)

Compare Abram's motivation with Lot's motivation. What major differences do you see?

7. What did Lot do according to verse 12?

What does this tell us about choosing a place to "set down our roots"?

What does verse 13 tell us about Sodom?

Using a concordance or Bible dictionary, can you find a definition for the word "wicked"?

Why do people today choose to live in a "wicked" city?

8. After Abram and Lot separate, God speaks to Abram. What does He say to Abram?

Look at Jesus' words in Luke 6:38. How does this verse apply to Abram's situation?

What does it mean to you that a verse spoken centuries AFTER Abram's act speaks to his situation?

How can we apply this truth to our lives?

9. God gives Abram two promises. What are they? (See vv. 15 & 16.)

Why did God make these promises to Abram?

What does God tell Abram to do?

God says something similar to Joshua before he entered the promised land. What did God say to Joshua?

Why do you believe God wanted Abram to walk the land?

What might we learn from "walking" our land?

10. What does Abram do?

11. In what ways were the events in this chapter significant in Abram's development as the father of our faith?

Genesis 14

This chapter gives us an insight into the political and military alliances of the time. Chapter 14 begins with the phrase "at this time" or "and it came to pass," signifying the passage of some time. Lot has remained in the area of Sodom and Gomorrah while Abraham has been walking the land God had promised to him.

1. Identify the two alliances that are preparing to do battle.

Which alliance is the dominant one?

What has happened to cause this conflict?

Are we still seeing nations go to war because one will not pay "tribute" to another?

What can we deduce from the fact that there are so many kings?

Who seems to be the dominant king? What can you learn about him?

2. Verses 5-7 tell us that in the 14th year Kedorlaomer moved against these rebellious cities. Can you trace his route on a map?

What can we learn about this king from these verses?

3. Verse 8 tells us that five kings allied themselves against Kedorlaomer. Who were these five kings?

Where were they going to meet the opposing four kings?

What was the Valley of Siddim like?

How would this affect the fighting?

4. What was the result of the battle?

What do we learn about Lot in verse 12?

Why do you think Lot was living in Sodom?

How would you describe Lot?

Read 2 Peter 2:7. What does it say about Lot?

What does it mean to you that Peter describes Lot as a righteous man?

5. How did Abram learn about Lot's abduction?

How did this fugitive or one who escaped know to tell Abram?

Where was Abram living at this time?

How close or far was this from Sodom?

6. What was Abram's immediate reaction?

What does this tell us about him?

Why do you think Abram had 318 trained men?

What does this tell us about being prepared?

How far did Abram pursue his nephew?

7. What plan did Abram use to overcome the kings?

Where do you think Abram learned to fight?

What was the result of Abram's fight?

What can we learn about Abram by his rescuing all the people and not just his nephew Lot?

8. Now we read of one of the most interesting encounters Abram has. When he returned from defeating Kedorlaomer, who came to greet him?

Why might this person be glad to see Abram?

Then, Abram is greeted by Melchizedek. Who is Melchizedek?

How far is Salem from Sodom?

Read vv 18-20. What do we learn about Melchizedek?

9. Many people believe that Melchizedek is "type" of Christ. In other words, his presence points to Christ. To help us understand this, what does Melchizedek bring when he meets Abram?

What do bread and wine have to do with Jesus?

Next, we read that he is the King of Salem. How does this point to Jesus?

Then, what does Melchizedek say to Abram? How does this relate to Jesus?

Finally, we read that Melchizedek is priest of God Most High. How does this relate to Christ?

10. As a result of his meeting with Melchizedek, what does Abram do?

Why do you believe Abram did this?

What can we learn about tithing from this episode?

Abram, the victor, humbles himself and gives to one who is greater than himself. What does this mean for us?

11. Maybe because he does not want to be outdone, what does the king of Sodom want to do?

What is Abram's response?

Why does Abram refuse?

How difficult would it be for you to refuse a gift that would make you wealthy for the rest of your life?

Can you think of such a gift that would not be acceptable to you?

What can we learn about honoring others and receiving honor from these verses?

Finally, what does Abram accept from the king of Sodom?

12. How has Abram changed since arriving in the promised land?

What do you think accounts for these changes?

In what way does he exhibit God-like qualities?

Genesis 15

1. Verse 1 begins with "After this," or "After these things." After what things?

The verse then tells us that the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. What does this mean to you?

Do you believe God still speaks to people today through visions? If so, can you give an example?

2. Read carefully what God says to Abram. How did God know Abram was afraid?

After such a resounding victory, why might Abram be afraid?

Do you think this due to a lack of fear? Please explain.

Does God criticize Abram or seem disappointed in him? Please explain.

Do you think less of Abram because he was afraid? Please explain.

What can we learn about God from this exchange? About Abram?

What comfort can we draw from God's words to Abram?

3. What does God say to Abram?

What does God mean when He says He is Abram's shield?

In what way is God Abram's "very great reward"?

In what way is God our "very great reward"?

4. How does Abram respond to God's words?

Does this show a lack of faith?

Who is Eliezer?

Why would he inherit Abram's estate?

How does this conflict with God's plan for Abram?

5. Abram tells God that God has not given him a son. What does this reveal about Abram?

Is Abram blaming God? Please explain.

6. Again, God is not upset by Abram's concern. Instead, He seeks to ease Abram's doubt. What does this tell us about God?

In what way or ways has God sought to answer your doubts?

Some people believe that having doubts shows a lack of faith. How would you respond?

What does God tell Abram?

Read verse 5 carefully. If you were Abram, what would this promise mean to you?

What significance does this promise hold for us today?

7. Verse 6 is an important verse. After God spoke to Abram, what did Abram do?

What does it mean to you that God credited it to Abram as righteousness?

Read Romans 4:20-24. What do these verses mean to you?

Can you give an example of someone who heard God or Jesus speak, yet did not believe Him?

How do you think Abram was able to believe God when the situation looked so hopeless? (Look back at all Abram had been through.)

How would you respond to someone who asked you if you were righteous? Please explain.

How does this verse relate to Romans 10:9-10 and Ephesians 2:8?

8. What else does God say to Abram in verse 7?

What does it mean to you that God is giving the land to Abram so he can take possession of it?

This is important. Does the land still belong to Abram's descendants?

How does this impact "land for peace" between Israel and the Palestinians?

9. God says to Abram, "I am the LORD." Sometimes lord is spelling in all capitals (LORD) and sometimes with one capital (Lord). What is the difference?

The Hebrew for LORD is YHVH. The Jews used no vowels because they considered God's name to be so holy that it should not be pronounced, thus making it very difficult to take His name in vain. Do we show the same reverence for His name?

Later, God tells us not to take His name in vain. What have you been taught this means?

Another translation reads that we are not to misuse the LORD's name. How is this different?

How can one "misuse" God's name?

To help us read the Bible, scholars added vowels to YHVH, which yielded YeHoVaH or Jehovah. No question here. Just a little information

10. Read verse 8. What question does Abram ask God?

Does this sound as if Abram is doubting God? (Look again at verse 6.)

What is the difference between seeking confirmation and doubting?

11. In response to Abram's question, God chooses to confirm His promise with a covenant. We have talked about a covenant before (Adam and Noah) so let's do a little review. What is a covenant?

How does it differ from a contract or an agreement?

In what way did Jesus seal His promise to us with a covenant?

12. God is going to cut a covenant with Abram. What does God instruct Abram to do?

What was Abram to do with these animals?

What is the significance of verse 11?

Now, this may seem strange to us, but Abram probably knew what was happening. What can you learn about how people in this area ratified a covenant and about the part the animals played?

13. What happened to Abram as he waited upon the LORD?

This is the same sleep God put upon Adam (see Gen. 2:21). Why might God place Abram in such a deep sleep?

What does it mean to you that a "dreadful darkness came over him"? (The KJV reads "an horror of great darkness fell upon him.")

14. Abram is now having a prophetic vision. What does this mean to you?

Read vv. 13-16. What does God tell Abram?

Why do you believe God began this vision by telling Abram his descendants would be enslaved and mistreated?

What would your reaction be to news of this sort?

Now, what might be one reason God had Abram in a deep sleep?

We know this part of the prophetic promise comes true with Israel's being enslaved in Egypt. What can we learn about God from this?

15. Verse 16 tells us that Abram's descendants will not return until the fourth generation. Why?

What does it mean to you that the sin of the Amorites had not reached its full measure? And what did this have to do with Abram's descendants?

What was going to happen to the Amorites when their sin reached its full measure? (Remember Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Why was God willing to wait 400 years?

What can we learn about God's mercy, judgment, and patience from this episode?

Does this help explain why some countries or regimes seem to prosper? Please explain.

16. Verse 17 tells us that the sun set again. How long has Abram been in a deep sleep?

Who or what is represented by the smoking firepot?

What does this firepot do?

What is the significance of God passing through the two halves of the animals?

Why does Abram not have to pass through them?

What does this tell us about God's covenant with Abram?

In what way does this point the way to the covenant we have with Jesus?

17. What is the covenant God makes with Abram?

On a map, can you identify the land that God gave to Abram's descendants?

Is this covenant still in effect? Please explain.

18. This is a key chapter in the history of Israel and of the church. What have you learned from this chapter?

Genesis 16

1. We can assume Abram told Sarai about the covenant with God. However, Abram is promised an heir, but Sarai is never mentioned. If you were Sarai, what would you be thinking as time passed?

Because of her condition, Sarai takes matters into her own hands. What does she decide to do?

Do you believe people still try to "help" God? Please explain.

Who exactly is Hagar?

How long do you think she has been with Abram and Sarai?

2. What does Sarai say about God in verse 2?

What is your reaction to this statement?

What does this tell us about Sarai?

Compare Sarai's statement about God with that of Abram's in Gen. 15:3. What is the difference?

3. What does Sarai tell Abram to do in verse 2?

Why does she do this?

What can you learn about this practice during Abram's time?

Do we see attempts to have families like this today? Please explain.

If so, what do you think about them?

What do you think about Sarai's plan?

Why do you think Abram went along with his wife's plan?

4. Look closely at verse 3. How long had Abram and Sarai been in the promised land?

How old would this make Abram?

Look closely at what happens next. The verse mentions that Hagar was Sarai's maidservant or maid. What would her status be as a maidservant?

However, what happens to Hagar when Sarai gives her to Abram?

What kind of problems do you think this might cause?

So, what can we learn about marriage customs at this time?

5. What happens when Abram sleeps with Hagar?

How does this affect the relationship between Hagar and Sarai?

Why do you think Hagar began to despise Sarai?

Again, notice what is happening. Hagar is still Sarai's servant, but she is also Abram's wife, as is Sarai. Again, why do you think Abram went along with this?

6. Do you think Hagar knew about God's promise to Abram?

7. After her relationship with Hagar turns sour, what does Sarai say to her husband?

Why do you think this might be Abram's fault?

Remember, Hagar was Sarai's maidservant. In other words, Hagar was her property. Why do you think Sarai did not just tell Hagar to leave?

What could Abram have done to ease the tension between Hagar and Sarai?

How did Abram decide to "solve" this dilemma?

Why do you think Abram chose this course of action?

8. After Abram tells Sarai to do whatever she wants to Hagar, how does Sarai decide to remedy the situation?

What does Hagar do?

What does this tell you about the conditions under which Hagar was living?

Now, we know Abram and Sarai are going the parents through which the promise of God will flow. Based upon this incident, what do you think of these parents-to-be?

9. Now comes another very interesting event. Up to this time during our study of Abram, God has only spoken to Abram. However, after Hagar flees into the wilderness, the angel of the LORD appears to Hagar. What does this tell you about God?

Hagar was an Egyptian slave. She did not believe in Him. Why would God care about her?

God addresses her by name. What does this mean to you?

What does it mean to you that God knows your name?

In what other way does God address Hagar? Why would God refer to her in such a way?

Many times people expect God to change their positions or situations. Yet, God does not always choose to do this. Why do you believe God does this?

If God already knows Hagar, why does He ask her where she is from and where is she going?

Can you think of a time when you believed you had a great idea, but when you were asked to verbalize it, your impression of the idea changed? If so, would you share this?

10. What is Hagar's answer?

Have you ever felt like running away from someone or something?

Why might God want us to stay put?

11. In verse 9, the LORD gives Hagar some interesting instructions. What does the LORD tell Hagar to do?

Why would God have her return to Sarai who had been mistreating her?

Suppose you worked for a not-so-understanding boss who took advantage of you. Can you think of a reason why God might have you stay put?

The LORD tells Hagar to submit to Sarai. What does this mean to you?

Many people do not like the word submit because they feel it is demeaning. Some couples even remove the word from their marriage vows. How do you feel about this?

What does the Bible say about submitting?

Has God ever asked you to submit to someone you did not necessarily admire? If so, what did you learn from this experience?

12. What does the angel of the LORD tell Hagar in verse 10?

Notice, the angel said, "I will increase..." What does it mean to you that the angel used the pronoun "I"?

How does God's promise to Hagar fit with God's promise to Abram?

Before this promise, what might the future hold for Hagar's child?

If you were in Hagar's situation, how might this promise make you feel? How would it make it easier to return to Sarai?

13. The LORD is not finished with Hagar. He tells her she is with child and the child will be a boy. What is the significance of this for Hagar?

What name is Hagar to give her son? What does this name mean?

Why is she to give her son this name?

The Hebrew word for "hear" is "shama" or "shamma" and this gives us one of the names for the LORD: Jehovah Shammah. What does this name mean?

What does it mean to you that this name was given to God by an Egyptian servant?

In what way have you experienced God as Jehovah Shammah?

14. Verse 12 contains another interesting prophecy concerning Ishmael. What else does God say about Ishmael?

What does it mean to you that he will be a "wild donkey of a man?"

This prophecy also says he will live in hostility with all his brothers. What does this mean to you?

What impact, if any, does this prophecy have on the events in the Middle East as they are unfolding today?

How do you feel about the events involving modern day Israel?

15. After the prophecy, Hagar gives the LORD another name: The God Who Sees. This name is El Roi: the God Who Sees. Why do you think Hagar gave the LORD this name?

Again, in what way have you experienced God as El Roi?

16. What can you learn about Hagar from reading verse 15?

What do we learn about Abram from verse 16?

Why do you believe the LORD included this piece of information?

17. We have been given a more intimate look at these three major characters in our history. After reading and discussing this chapter, how would describe Abram?

How would you describe Sarai?

How would you describe Hagar?

18. What have you learned about God from this episode?

Genesis 17

1. How much time has passed between chapters 16 and 17?

How long has Abram been in the promised land?

How long has it been since God first made a covenant with Abram?

Nothing is said about this period of time, but we can make some assumptions provided we are careful not to make the scriptures say something they do not. What do you think has been happening in Abram's household during this time?

How old is Ishmael? What do you think life has been like for him?

Whom do you believe has taken the responsibility to raise him?

2. Verse 1 states that the LORD appeared to Abram. What does this mean to you?

God identifies Himself as whom? This is another name for God. What is the name in the Hebrew?

Why do you think God referred to Himself as God Almighty?

After telling Abram that He is God Almighty, what instructions does God give Abram?

What does it mean to you to walk before the LORD?

What does it mean to you to be blameless?

Do these instructions still apply to us today? If so, how can one walk before the LORD and be blameless?

3. What does God say to Abram in verse 2?

God has already made this covenant with Abram. Why is He "making" it again?

4. Abram has spoken with God many times. Yet, this time is different. How does Abram react to God's statement?

Why do you think Abram fell face down this time?

5. God speaks to Abram once again. God begins in verse 4 by once again saying He is going to make a covenant with Abram. Why does God repeat this?

Read verses 4-8 carefully and list the provisions of God's covenant with Abram?

What "new" provisions are listed?

As part of the covenant, God changes Abram's name to Abraham. What does Abram mean? What does Abraham mean?

Why would God change Abram's name?

Can you think of other instances where God has changed a person's name?

God also tells Abraham that kings will come from him. If you were Abraham, what would this mean to you?

God also tells Abraham that He will make nations plural of him. What does this mean?

What does God say about his covenant with Abraham in verse 7?

When does God say about the land He is giving to Abraham in verse 8?

6. Now we begin to see why God has chosen Abraham and set him apart. What does God tell Abraham about his descendants in verse 7?

What does it mean to you when God says He will be their God?

7. Verse 4 began with God's saying, "As for me...." What followed was God's responsibility in this covenant. Verse 9 begins with God's saying, "As for you...." For the first time, we will hear of Abraham's responsibility. What is the first thing God tells Abraham he is to do?

How could Abraham see that his descendants would keep God's covenant?

Next, God tells Abraham what covenant he is to keep. What does Abraham have to do to keep God's covenant?

Look carefully once again at all of God's responsibility in this covenant compared to what Abraham is to do. Does this seem a little lop-sided?

Is there any way we could ever enter into an "equal" covenant with God? Please explain.

8. Why would God require Abraham to circumcise every male?

Is there any way, once this was done, to turn back? What is the significance of this?

Just as a sign of a marriage covenant is the ring, circumcision is the sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Is it still? Please explain.

God also tells Abraham that he is to circumcise even those bought from a foreigner. What does this mean?

What significance does this hold for us today?

What is to happen to all uncircumcised males?

9. Next, God changes Sarai's name. What is her new name?

Can you find out what Sarai means? What Sarah means?

For the first time, God mentions Sarah. What does God say about her?

Which promises do Abraham and Sarah have in common?

10. In verse 17 we read that once again Abraham falls facedown before the LORD. However, what else does he do?

Why do you think Abraham laughed?

What was going through Abraham's mind when he laughed?

11. What does Abraham ask God in verse 18?

Why do you think Abraham is concerned about Ishmael?

Do you think Abraham was asking if Ishmael was the child of promise? Please explain.

What does God say in response to Abraham's request?

For the first time we hear of Isaac. What does the name "Isaac" mean?

What do we learn about Isaac?

What does God say He will do for Ishmael?

How many rulers will come from Ishmael? What does this number mean to you?

12. In verse 21 God is very clear. What does God say about Ishmael and Isaac?

When is Isaac to be born?

What effect do you think this news will have upon Sarah?

Hagar?

Ishmael?

13. What does Abraham do the very day God leaves him?

What does this tell us about obedience to the LORD?

What do you think Abraham told Ishmael?

Again, how old is Ishmael when he is circumcised? How old is Abraham?

Why do you think we are told several times that every male, including Abraham and Ishmael, were circumcised?

Genesis 18

1. Again, we are not told how much time passes. This time we find Abraham doing what?

Why would Abraham be found sitting at the door of his tent?

What does this tell us about Abraham's life in this place?

Verse 1 tells us that Who visited Abraham?

Then, verse 2 tells us that three men came to Abraham's tent. Putting these two pieces of information together, what can we infer?

Read Hebrews 13:2. What does this mean to you?

2. How did Abraham react when he first saw the strangers?

Abraham is the head of this family and has numerous servants. Why does Abraham run to meet them himself?

How does Abraham treat these strangers?

3. Abraham exhibits great hospitality. What does it mean to you to be hospitable?

Why do you believe God places such a high priority on hospitality?

What can we learn about entertaining strangers from Abraham's actions?

4. As another act of hospitality, Abraham sends for water so the strangers can wash their feet. Why do you think he does this?

Do Abraham's actions remind you of anyone else?

How would you feel if someone offered to wash your feet?

How would you feel if God asked you to wash someone else's feet?

5. In verse 5 how does Abraham refer to himself?

What does this show us about Abraham?

What are some ways we can refresh others?

6. To whom does Abraham go to get bread?

Why does Abraham pick out the calf himself?

Abraham and Sarah are involved with the meal, but they don't prepare it personally. Why?

How do their actions illustrate what Jesus said to Martha and Mary?

7. What question do the strangers ask Abraham in verse 9?

What does Abraham answer?

Why do you think Sarah was not with them?

8. Verse 9 tells us "'they" asked the question. Yet, verse 10 shows a shift. Who is speaking in verse 10?

How do you explain the LORD's talking and eating with Abraham?

9. What does God tell Abraham?

God knows Sarah is listening. Why doesn't God tell Sarah herself?

Up to this time, God tells what He is going to do for Abraham. Why does God mention Sarah this time?

10. What do we learn from verse 11?

Why do you think God waited until they were old and past the age of childbearing before giving them a child?

If something like this happened today, how do you think people would react?

11. According to verse 12, what was Sarah's reaction?

What does Sarah think to herself?

At first glance, we may judge Sarah harshly. However, does her reaction seem out of place? Please explain.

Also, notice carefully what she says. What does she say about herself? About Abraham?

What does she mean when she says she is "worn out"?

12. In verse 13, the LORD addresses Abraham. Why doesn't the LORD address Sarah since she is the one who laughed?

The LORD repeats what Sarah thought. What does this mean to you?

What does the LORD say to Abraham in verse 14?

What does this mean to you?

Why might be one reason the LORD waited so long to give Abraham and Sarah a child?

13. Remember, Sarah can hear the exchange. When she hears what the LORD says, what is her reaction in verse 15?

What does it mean to you that they use the word "lied" in this verse?

What does this tell you about Sarah?

How does God respond?

What can we learn from this exchange about being honest with God?

Now begins one of the most interesting and discussed stories of the Bible. By now Abraham knows that he is speaking with God. Following God's promise to Abraham and Sarah, God turns His attention to Sodom and Gomorrah.

14. Why do you believe verse 16 states that the "men" got up to leave?

Based upon the fact that they could look down upon Sodom, what can you determine about where Abraham is living?

Why did Abraham go along with them?

15. What does God say in verse 17?

What does this verse mean to you?

Read Amos 3:7. What does this verse mean to you?

Why would God not do something without first telling us through His prophets?

Can you think of a recent example where God first told His prophets about what He was going to do?

How do you feel about prophets and prophecy?

What would you say to those who do not believe this gift exists any more?

16. What does God say about Abraham in verse 18?

What does it mean to you that all nations will be blessed through Abraham?

Do you still think this will be fulfilled?

If so, what does this mean will have to happen?

17. According to verse 19, what is one of Abraham's greatest responsibilities?

Do fathers still share this same responsibility? Please explain.

What are the consequences for Abraham if he does not direct his children to follow the LORD?

God also says that Abraham is to teach his children what is right and just. Could the LORD be involving Abraham so Abraham can see what happens when people are not right and just? Please explain.

18. What does God say about Sodom and Gomorrah in verse 20?

Who do you think raised this outcry?

What does it tell you about God that their sin was so great and so grievous?

Why do you think God did not act before this?

19. Verse 21 tells us that God is going to go down and see if the people are really that bad. How do you explain this since God is omniscient?

What does this tell you about God and His justice?

20. As the two "men" leave for Sodom, Abraham stays behind. Why?

Verse 23 says that Abraham approached God. Some versions read that Abraham drew near to God before speaking. What does this mean to you?

How comfortable would you be staying behind to speak to God about such a matter?

Have you ever interceded for a city? Please explain.

Why would Abraham care about a city filled with sinful people?

21. Read verse 25. What does this verse mean to you?

Is Abraham treading on dangerous ground? Please explain.

22. Look carefully at Abraham's question to God in verse 23. Is he saying God is not just? Please explain.

What does this question show us about Abraham's relationship with God?

Does this "fit" with most people's understanding of God? Please explain.

23. The rest of chapter 18 contains a dialogue between God and Abraham. Briefly, what is going on?

Some people have said that Abraham is changing God's mind. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain.

Was God being unfair in that He was going to kill the righteous with the unrighteous?
Again, please explain.

Is Abraham convincing God that God had made a mistake?

24. What does this exchange reveal to us about God and His nature?

What do these verses teach us about prayer?

Based upon this exchange, how would describe Abraham's relationship with God?

Can we have that same type of relationship?

25. Now read the following verses: I Peter 3:18; Matthew 5:45. Along with this exchange between God and Abraham, what do these verses teach us about the righteous and the unrighteous?

Based upon what we have studied in this chapter, how would you explain what happened to New Orleans?

Was God being unjust?

Genesis 19

Now the story switches from God and Abraham to the two angels. We are going to see why the outcry against these two cities was so great.

1. As the angels arrived at Sodom, where was Lot?

What is the significance of sitting in the gateway of a city?

What does this tell us about Lot and his position in Sodom?

2. What did Lot do when he saw the angels?

How are his actions similar to those of his uncle, Abraham?

What can we learn about Sodom in that no one else paid any attention to the strangers?

What can we learn about the angels in that Lot treats them as visitors?

What does Lot want the angels to do?

How do the angels respond?

How safe would it be for strangers to sleep in the "town square"?

3. Verse 3 says that Lot insisted strongly that they go with him. Why?

Because of Lot's actions, what did the angels decide to do?

Lot made a meal for them. Do you think he knew who these strangers were? Please explain.

4. What happens in verse 4?

Who exactly surrounded the house?

Why do you think the Bible points out that this mob included the young and the old?

What does this tell you about Sodom?

According to verse 5, what did all the men of the city want?

Do you think this really happened or was it an exaggeration?

What do you think it would be like to live in such a city?

5. What does Lot do?

Why was Lot not afraid of the men?

Why do you think Lot closed the door behind him?

6. Look carefully at what Lot does next. In order to save the two strangers from this mob, what was Lot offer to do?

Is Lot serious? If so, what does this tell us about Lot?

Some commentaries say Lot's offer is proof that even he was affected by the sin of the city. Others state that Lot was simply protecting his guests as was the custom of the times. How do you view Lot's actions?

Also, is it possible that Lot offered the mob his daughters knowing that they would not accept his offer? If so, then what was the purpose?

If you were one of Lot's daughters, what would you be thinking?

7. What do the men of Sodom say to Lot?

What do they mean that Lot is an alien?

How do they feel about Lot's trying to tell them what is right and what is wrong?

Do people today still get upset when someone tries to point out right from wrong? Can you give an example?

What do the men of Sodom threaten to do to Lot?

What did the men do then?

8. The LORD had seen enough. The angels now act. What did they do to save Lot's life?

What do they do to the crowd of men?

Even after they are all struck blind, what do the men still try to do?

At this point, how would you describe Sodom and its inhabitants?

Let's take Abraham's conversation with God one step further. Are there five righteous men in Sodom?

Do you think there are really places like this today?

9. In verse 12, what do the two angels ask Lot?

Based on their comments, what is about to happen?

Do you think there is any doubt in Lot's mind that these are not strangers but angels of the LORD?

The angels again say that the outcry against Sodom is so great that God is going to destroy it. What are some of the sins that have caused such an outcry?

Are we still seeing these sins today?

10. Who is in the house with Lot?

Lot also wants to save his two future sons-in-law. Where does he find them?

Being careful, what can we infer about these two men?

How do they respond to Lot's entreaties?

Why might they not believe Lot?

11. Verse 14 states that these two men were pledged to marry his daughters. What does this mean?

What affect does our environment have upon us?

Can you think of examples where people did not take God's warnings seriously?

Does our country as a whole pay attention to such warnings? Why or why not?

12. What do the angels urge Lot to do in verse 15?

Has Lot done all he could to spare the lives of innocent people? Please explain.

13. What was Lot's reaction as recorded in verse 16?

Why was it so dangerous for Lot to hesitate?

What can we learn about obedience from this verse? Compare it to 17:23.

What did the angels do when Lot hesitated?

How did Lot and his family make it safely out of Sodom?

Have you ever hesitated to obey God because you were concerned about what you had to leave behind? Please explain.

14. What do the angels instruct Lot and his family to do?

Why was it important for Lot not to look back?

What can we learn from this advice?

Where were Lot and his family to run?

15. What does Lot ask of the angels in verse 19?

How sound is his argument? Please explain.

Where does Lot want to go?

Why do you think Lot keeps pointing out that the town is small?

16. Look carefully at the angel's response in verse 21. What is it?

What was the angel going to do to the "small" town before Lot planned to make it his hiding place?

What does this tell us about that city?

Why do you think Lot might have wanted to go there instead of to the mountains?

Why do the angels want Lot to flee quickly?

What was the name of the small town?

17. When did Lot reach Zoar? Looking at when they left Sodom, how far do you think they ran?

How did the LORD destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?

Why do you think we are told twice in verse 24 that the destruction was from the LORD?

Who and what exactly did the LORD destroy?

Why do you think the destruction was so complete? Specifically, why do you think the LORD destroyed even the vegetation?

What part of God's character are we witnessing in these verses?

18. Verse 26 is short and succinct. What does it tell us?

Why do you think Lot's wife looked back?

Why was doing so such a terrible thing that God would punish her in this way?

How did Lot and his daughters respond?

Why do you think we are never told Lot's wife's name?

What spiritual message can we learn from this verse about Lot's wife?

Look at Matthew 6:24. How does this verse relate to what happened to Lot's wife?

19. The narrative temporarily leaves Lot and his daughters and returns to Abraham. Why do you think God does this?

Why does Abraham get up early in the morning?

Would you have done the same? In other words, if you had received word that God was going to destroy an entire city, would you want to see it? Please explain.

What does Abraham see as he looks down upon the plain?

Remembering his conversation with God the day before, how do you think Abraham felt?

20. What can we learn about intercessory prayer from verse 29?

God did not relent in his judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. But He did remember Abraham. What does this mean to you?

According to verse 29, why did God bring Lot out of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah?

21. The narrative now returns to Lot and his daughters. Why do Lot and his daughters leave Zoar?

Where do they go?

Reread verses 17 and 20. What were God's original instructions to Lot? Why did he choose to flee to Zoar instead?

What changed his mind about staying in this city?

Read carefully verse 30. Lot did not just flee to the mountains. What did he choose to do? Why do you think he made this choice?

Instead of living in a nice house, Lot moves his daughters into a cave. What affect might this have had on his daughters?

22. We are told that Lot chose to make this cave his home. After a period of time, what became the major concern of his daughters?

Why would this be so important to them? (Remember, who else was killed in the destruction of Sodom?)

Why do you think they did not talk to their father about this?

23. Again, we see what happens when we try to "help" God. Previously, what had Abraham done? What had Sarai done?

Now, what does the older daughter suggest?

What was her motivation?

Why do you think this came from the older of the two daughters?

How does the daughter suggest they proceed with their plan?

Before we go any further, does Lot bear any responsibility for this current situation?

As their father, what should he have done?

Where could he possibly have found suitable husbands for his daughters? (See Genesis 24:3-4.)

What type of relationship do you think Lot had with his daughters? Please explain.

24. What the daughters plan to do seems very hard to comprehend. They were in a very difficult situation: they lost their fiancés; they saw their mother die; they find themselves living in a cave; and they have a father who does not seem to care. How do you feel about their decision?

Why do you think they did not cry out to God as Abraham had done?

According to verses 33-35, what do the daughters do?

What does it tell you about Lot that he was not aware of what had happened?

How should we "judge" Lot and his daughters in this episode?

Are the daughters' actions excusable at all? Please explain.

25. We are told that Lot was not aware at all that his daughters had lain with him. However, verse 36 tells us that both of his daughters became pregnant. How do you think Lot accounted for this?

Do you think his daughters told him what they did?

26. The Bible never states that God condemned Lot or his daughters. No judgment is made about their actions as being good or bad. Why do you believe this is so?

However, God does let us see the consequences of these events. What is the name of the older daughter's son? The younger daughter?

What can you learn about the Moabites and the Ammonites?

What type of relationship did they have with their "cousin" Israel?

What can we learn about the consequences of sin from this episode?

27. Everything in the Old Testament is recorded so that we can learn from it. What can you learn from this chapter about Sodom and Gomorrah and from Lot and his family?

Jesus also used this story to teach those around Him. Read Luke 17:30-36. Why do you believe Jesus tells us to remember Lot's wife?

What does the rest of this passage have to do with us today?

Genesis 20

A great deal has happened to Abraham. God reaffirms His covenant. He assures Abraham that he will have a son by his wife Sarah. God protects Abraham as Abraham rescues Lot and the other inhabitants of Sodom. God visits Abraham personally, and they talk about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

1. Verse 1 states that Abraham moved on. Where did he go?

Can you locate any of these places on a map?

2. We do not know exactly what happened, but obviously, Abraham found himself in a difficult position once again. What does he decide to do?

Keeping in mind all that had happened to Abraham, how do you explain his decision?

What do you think Sarah was thinking?

3. According to these verses, why did Abimelech send for Sarah?

Why was this such a dangerous situation for Abraham? For Sarah? For Abimelech?

From these verses, do you think Abimelech knew the LORD? Please explain.

4. God displays His infinite mercy on all involved. What does God do in order to stop Abimelech?

Look closely at what God says to Abimelech. Why would God warn the king using such strong language?

How does the king react to this admonition from the LORD?

Why do you think the LORD did not visit Abraham?

5. Verse 4 tells us that Abimelech had not gone near Sarah. Why?

Then we read that Abimelech responded to God. What does this mean to you?

What did Abimelech say to God?

Is it wrong for Abimelech to be so bold? Please explain.

Upon whose shoulders does Abimelech put the blame? (Read carefully verse 5.) Is he justified?

6. God shows great mercy here in not allowing Abimelech to sin. How would you define God's mercy?

What does this show you about God and His desire to be a part of our lives?

Can you remember a time when God intervened to keep you from sinning? If so, would you mind sharing a little?

7. For what reasons did God keep Abimelech from sinning with Sarah?

What does it mean to you that God was looking out for Abimelech as well as for Sarah?

8. Look at verse 7. What does the LORD tell Abimelech to do?

What does God call Abraham?

This is the first time this word is used in the Old Testament. How would you define a prophet?

In what way was Abraham a prophet?

What does this have to do with God's instructions to Abimelech that Abraham would pray for him so that Abimelech could live?

Therefore, what was Abraham's first prophetic act? What does this mean to you?

What is the connection between intercession and prophecy?

Now, Abraham caused this situation by giving his wife away. Why would God continue to use him as a prophet?

9. What did Abimelech do the next morning?

Why do you think he told all of his officials?

Then, Abimelech sends for Abraham. What is the first thing he says to Abraham?

What exactly did Abimelech accuse Abraham of doing?

How would you feel having to go to Abraham for prayer knowing Abraham was responsible for the situation?

10. This was a humbling situation for both men. In what way was Abimelech humbled?

In what way was it humbling for Abraham?

How do you think Abraham felt listening to all that Abimelech said?

Remember, God never said anything to Abraham, yet Abimelech does. What can you learn about God's discipline from this?

If you were Abraham, what would you consider the most important lesson?

Sometimes we might wonder why God allows certain situations instead of removing them. How did God use this situation to teach Abraham and Sarah?

11. What question does Abimelech ask Abraham in verse 10?

What is Abraham's answer in verse 11?

Why might Abraham think that there would be no fear of God in Abimelech's kingdom? (Remember what had just happened.)

Do you agree with his belief that there was no fear of God in that place? Please explain.

What can we learn about judging people or peoples from this?

12. Abraham continues his answer in verse 12 with the word "besides...." Why do you think Abraham uses this word?

What does it mean to you to justify your actions?

Is that what Abraham is doing here? Please explain.

Abraham says he was really telling the truth, but he was deceiving Abimelech. How can you reconcile this? In other words, how can telling the truth really be a form of deception?

Can you think of an example?

13. What does Abimelech do in verse 14?

Originally, all God told Abimelech to do was to return Sarah. Why do you think he chooses to do more?

What exactly does Abimelech do?

What offer does he make to Abraham?

14. Next, Abimelech turns to Sarah. Why do you think he choose to address her personally?

What does he say to her?

When speaking to Sarah, how does he refer to Abraham?

If you were Abraham and you heard this, how would it make you feel?

This is interesting. The King James Version for verse 16 reads, "And unto Sarah he said 'Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other': thus she was reproved." What do you think is meant by a "covering of the eyes"?

15. After this, Abraham prays for Abimelech. What had God done to Abimelech and his household because of Sarah?

What did God do as a result of Abraham's prayer?

Why do you think we are not told what Abraham prayed?

16. What did you learn from this episode with Abimelech?

What happens when people outside the church act more honorably than people inside the church?

Genesis 21

1. Finally, after 20 years, the time has come for God's promise to Abraham and Sarah to be fulfilled. Verse 1 states that God was gracious to Sarah. The KJV states that the LORD visited Sarah. What does this mean to you?

Verse 1 also tells us that things happened just as God had said. What can we learn from this statement?

Read Isaiah 55:11. What does this verse mean to you?

How does it apply to this situation?

2. Why do you believe the Bible makes it so clear that Sarah became pregnant just as God had promised?

How old was Sarah when she became pregnant? Abraham?

Also, we are told that this happened at the very time God had chosen. What does this tell us about God's timing?

3. After all this anticipation, the birth of Abraham and Sarah's son covers one verse. Sarah got pregnant and gave birth. Why do you think God does not say more about this time?
4. What did Abraham name his son?

What does Isaac mean?

What does Abraham do next?

5. What does Sarah say in verse 6?

In what way has God brought laughter to Sarah?

This is the most we have heard from Sarah. How has the birth of Isaac changed Sarah?

6. Lest we forget, there is another son in this family. Who is it?

When was the last time we heard about Ishmael?

How do you think the birth of Isaac affected Ishmael?

How do you think it affected Hagar?

Why do you think we have not heard about them for some time?

What do you think this household was like during this time?

7. Verse 8 tells us that the child grew and was weaned. Can you learn at what age boys were usually weaned during this time?

What did Abraham do?

Why do you think he did this?

Again, what affect do you think this had on Ishmael?

8. What does Sarah notice about Ishmael?

What does it mean to you that Ishmael was mocking Isaac?

Again, how old is Isaac? How old is Ishmael?

What would you do as a parent if your stepson was mocking your son?

What should Abraham do?

How does Sarah handle the situation?

What does she want Abraham to do?

What can you find out about the meaning of the word "cast out" in her demand?

How do you feel about her request?

9. What affect did Sarah's request have upon Abraham?

Why do you think this matter distressed or bothered Abraham so much?

Read verse 11 carefully. It says Abraham was distressed because of his son. To which son do you think this verse is referring?

10. Then, God enters the situation. What does God say to Abraham in verse 12?

Does it surprise you that God tells Abraham to listen to whatever Sarah tells him?

Does this mean God does not care about Ishmael and Hagar? Please explain.

Why do you think God told Abraham to cast out his son Ishmael?

In what way might Ishmael proven to be a threat to Isaac?

What promise does God make concerning Ishmael?

11. At one time Ishmael was Abraham's only son. He enjoyed all Abraham had. Now, the situation changes drastically for him. What does Abraham do early the next morning?

Ishmael is now a young man. His father sends him away. What is his inheritance?

Whom does Abraham send with them to watch over them?

Why does he not seem worried about them?

Can you locate the desert of Beersheba?

12. What did Hagar do when they ran out of water?

Does this remind you of another time when Hagar ran away?

We read in verse 17 that God heard the boy crying. What do you think of Ishmael that he would be crying?

What does it mean to you that God heard his crying?

Neither Hagar nor Ishmael asks God anything. Yet, God responds. What can this teach us about prayer?

13. What does God say to Hagar?

What does he tell her to do with Ishmael?

Again, God repeats His promise concerning Ishmael. What is it?

14. What does verse 19 tell us?

What does it mean to you that God opened her eyes?

Why could she not see the well before?

In what ways are we like Hagar?

Can you think of some things that you were not able to see until God opened your eyes?

15. According to verse 20, God was with the boy Ishmael as he grew up. What does this mean to you?

Why do you think God was with him?

What happens to Ishmael?

This is interesting. From where does Hagar get a wife for her son?

What can you learn about Ishmael's descendants?

What was their relationship with Isaac's descendants?

16. Read Galatians 4:29-30. What is the significance of verse 29?

What does it mean to you that children of the flesh will persecute children of the spirit?

Why do you think Paul used the terms "slave" and "free" to describe the two sons?

How does this apply to us?

How has God used this story of Ishmael and Isaac to teach us today?

17. We hear once again from Abimelech. Who was he?

What does he say about Abraham?

How would he know God is with Abraham?

How would people know God is with us?

What favor does he ask of Abraham?

Does it seem ironic to you that a king would be asking the favor of a wandering, seemingly homeless man?

Abimelech asks Abraham to show him the same kindness that Abimelech showed to Abraham and his family. What spiritual truths can we learn from this?

Which of Jesus' teachings follow along these same lines?

What can we learn from this about our relationship with kings and presidents?

As a person of God, would it bother you to share your blessings with unbelievers? Please explain.

18. Why does Abimelech ask Abraham not to deal falsely with him or with his descendants?

How do you think this made Abraham feel?

19. Abraham swears that he will keep the oath. What does it mean to you to swear an oath?

What does the LORD say about swearing oaths?

After swearing the oath, what complaint does Abraham have?

How does Abimelech respond?

Do you think he is telling the truth? Please explain.

Why would Abraham be so concerned about a well?

What can you learn about the importance of water in this region? What can you learn about the control of wells?

20. What treaty do Abraham and Abimelech make?

What does Abraham give Abimelech as a sign of this treaty?

Why do you think Abimelech did not give Abraham anything in return?

After securing the treaty, what does Abraham do?

Why does he do this?

Why do you think Abimelech did not know the meaning of these seven lambs?

What name did they give the well? What does it mean?

21. After finalizing the treaty, what does Abimelech do?

What does Abraham do?

Why do you think he planted a tree?

Why might Abraham have called upon the name of the LORD?

After this, where did Abraham go? Where was the land of the Phillistines?

Genesis 22

1. Chapter 22 records one of the most pivotal episodes in Abraham's life. Following are two versions of verse 1:

Genesis 22:1 (NIV) ¹Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

Genesis 22:1 (KJV) ¹And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

The NIV says that God tested Abraham; the KJV version says that God did tempt Abraham. What is the difference between being tested and being tempted?

What does the Bible say about God tempting us? (See James 1:13.)

2. Why would God test someone?

What are some ways that God might test us?

Have you ever been tested? If so, would you mind sharing one of those tests?

What did you learn from being tested?

Read I Peter 1:7. How does this verse relate to this aspect of Abraham's life?

3. We have spent considerable time looking at Abraham's shortcomings and his growth. Look at his response to God's call in verse 1. What does this tell you about Abraham?

In what ways would you say Abraham has matured?

Can you learn anything about how old Isaac would be?

4. What does God tell Abraham to do?

Why do you think God told Abraham to take his son, HIS ONLY SON?

If you were Abraham, what might you be thinking?

What can we learn about Abraham in that he does not verbally respond to God's command?

5. According to verse 3, what does Abraham do?

6. What does it mean to you that Abraham took his son the next morning?

In what way is this call similar to the first call Abraham received from God?

Whom does Abraham take with him?

Why do you think Abraham cut the wood for the sacrifice before leaving? Why didn't he cut it at the site of the sacrifice?

What do you think the servants and Isaac were thinking?

7. How long did Abraham and Isaac have to travel before they reached the place God had chosen?

What is significant about this time frame?

Look carefully at what Abraham tells his servants in verse 4. What does he tell them?

God told Abraham to go to this place to sacrifice. Abraham tells his servants that he and Isaac are going to worship the LORD. How do you explain Abraham's choice of words?

What is the relation between sacrifice and worship?

Why do you think Abraham told his servants that both he and Isaac would return?

8. Who carried the wood for the sacrifice?

What is the significance of this act?

Of what does this remind you?

9. In verse 7 Isaac speaks up. What does he ask his father?

In a similar situation, what question does Jesus ask of His Father?

What do you think was going through Isaac's mind?

What was Abraham's answer?

What do you think Abraham meant by this?

What is the significance of the last part of verse 8?

Again, how does this parallel Jesus' response to God when He was in the garden?

10. Verse 9 very simply states what happened next. When they reached the top of the mountain, what did Abraham do?

We are told that Abraham tied Isaac up and placed him on the altar. How do you think he managed to do this? In other words, why didn't Isaac fight back or run away?

What does this tell us about Isaac?

In what way do Isaac's actions point to Jesus?

11. Verse 10 says that Abraham took his knife to slay his son. What do you think is actually happening in this verse?

Was Abraham really going to kill his son, or do you think he knew God would stop him? Please explain.

Remember Abraham's words to his servants: both he and Isaac would return. How do you explain these words seeing that Abraham is just seconds from killing his son?

12. Who stops Abraham?

What does the angel of the LORD tell Abraham?

This situation is similar to what happened to Hagar and Ishmael. Remember, God opened her eyes so she could see the well. Now, God opens Abraham's eyes so he can see the ram. Was the ram there all the time?

What is the significance of God's replacing Abraham's sacrifice with His sacrifice?

What implication does this hold for us?

If the ram is symbolic of God's providing Jesus as a replacement for our sacrifice, what is God teaching us in this episode?

Also, what does it mean that the sacrifice (the ram) had always been there, but Abraham could not see it?

13. What does Abraham do when he finally sees the ram?

What do you think Isaac was doing? (Remember, what did Abraham tell the servants they were going to the mountain to do?)

What does Abraham name this place?

In the Hebrew, this name translates into Jehovah Jireh, another one of God's names. What does it mean to you that God is our Provider?

What does it mean to you when Abraham says, "On the mountain of the LORD, it will be provided?"

14. What can we learn about Abraham through this testing?

The angel of the LORD appears to Abraham a second time. What does he tell Abraham?

What was God looking for in Abraham?

At the end of verse 18, we read why *God* was going to fulfill His promises. What was that reason?

15. Where does Abraham go after he comes down from the mountain?

Can you locate this place on your map?

16. This is a very significant chapter for Abraham and for us. What would you say are the biggest lessons Abraham learned?

What has this chapter taught you about *God*?

About sacrifice?

About Jesus?

17. The last part of this chapter addresses Nahor. Who was he?

Why do you think *God* tells Abraham about his brother?

Do any of the names of Nahor's children mean anything to you?

Genesis 23

1. Looking at all Abraham and Sarah have been through, how would you describe their relationship?

Do you believe they loved each other? Please explain.

2. We now read that at the age of 127 Sarah died. Sarah is the only woman whose age is mentioned in the Bible. Why do you believe this is so?

What effect do you think Sarah's death had on Abraham?

On Isaac? (How old was Isaac when his mother died?)

Where did Sarah die? Can you locate this place on a map?

This town is in the land of the Hittites. What can you learn about the Hittites?

3. Why did Abraham have nowhere to bury his wife?

How do you think this made Abraham feel?

God promised him all this land, yet he had no place to bury his wife. Why do you think God did this?

4. What does Abraham ask of the Hittites?

Do you think the Hittites knew who Abraham was? Please explain.

How do you think Abraham felt having to purchase land the LORD told him was going to be his?

5. How do the Hittites respond to Abraham's request?

Read verse 6 carefully. Are the Hittites being serious? Please explain.

Why might none of the Hittites refuse Abraham?

Does the fact that none of them would refuse mean they want to give Abraham the land? Please explain.

6. What does Abraham do in verse 7?

Why might he have done this?

Instead of taking the land, what does Abraham ask the Hittites to do for him?

What does it mean to you that Abraham asked them to intercede for him?

What can this teach us about intercessory prayer?

What does Abraham want from Ephron, the Hittite?

Where is the cave Abraham wants to buy?

How much is he willing to pay for this cave?

7. From verse 10 we find out that Ephron was sitting in the gate with Abraham and the rest. Why did Abraham not speak directly to him?

After Abraham offers to buy the cave, what does Ephron say in return?

They are conducting business in the gate of the city. Why in this place?

What does Ephron offer to do in verse 11?

What else does he offer to "give" Abraham in addition to the cave?

Is he truly offering to give Abraham the land and the cave? Please explain.

8. We are witnessing a business deal in the making. How does Abraham respond to Ephron's offer to "give" him the land?

Again notice, all of this is done in the hearing of others. Why is this important?

Finally, we learn the price for the land. However, Ephron does come out and say, "This is what the land is worth." Instead, how does he put it?

9. Abraham agrees to pay the full price for the land. Why do you think he does not try to get the land for a lower price?

Therefore, this becomes the first plot of land that Abraham owns. Why is this significant?

Again, can you find this area on a modern map of Israel?

10. What did Abraham purchase from Ephron?

Several times we read that the land was deeded to Abraham. Why do you think this is so important?

Genesis 24

1. Verse 1 tells us that Abraham was old and that God had blessed him in many ways. What are some of the ways God had blessed Abraham?
2. In the last chapter, we said that Isaac was probably around 40 years old. How do you think the death of his mother affected him?

Do we have any indication that Isaac was interested in marrying? Please explain.

Why do you think Abraham is concerned about finding a wife for his son?

3. Abraham had been married to Sarah for many years. What qualities did Sarah have that Abraham might want to see in his daughter-in-law?

If you were to give advice to a young person concerning a mate, what would be your advice?

4. Whom does Abraham ask to perform this most important deed?

What can you learn about this "chief servant"?

What does Abraham ask this servant to do?

Why do you think Abraham does not want a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanites?

Where is the servant going to have to go to get a wife for Isaac?

What can we learn about this servant that Abraham would trust him with such an important task and that Abraham would trust him to return?

5. This next part is interesting. What does Abraham ask the servant to do as a means of swearing an oath?

What can you learn about this practice?

By what or whom is the servant to swear?

6. The servant has a concern. What is it?

Does Abraham put any conditions on this "wife" other than she is to be of his family?

If you were the servant, how would you go about choosing a wife for your master's only son?

The servant wants to know if he should take Isaac back to the country they came from if he can't bring back a wife. What is Abraham's response?

Why does Abraham not want Isaac to return to the place from which they had come?

What can we learn from this admonition from Abraham?

7. Abraham makes it quite clear that under no circumstance is the servant to take Isaac back. Why do you think Abraham does not include Isaac in this conversation?

What will happen if the servant cannot convince the woman to return with him?

What do you think would be the hardest part about convincing a young woman to leave her home and return with you?

Abraham and the servant seal the oath according to Abraham's request. Why do you think we are not told the servant's name?

8. What did the servant take with him?

What do you think was on the ten camels?

Why do you think Abraham sent all of these items with the servant?

What could people learn about Isaac from the servant and all he had with him?

9. Verse 10 tells us the servant left and arrived in Nahor. How long a journey was this?

Why do you think we are not told more about such an arduous trip?

10. When the servant arrives, where does he go?

Why do you think he stopped at the wells?

At what time of day does the servant arrive? What happens each day at this time?

11. Now we witness the faith of Abraham's servant. Knowing he is facing a difficult situation, the servant prays. What does he ask God?

What would watering the ten camels involve?

Isaac is from a very wealthy family. Does wealth seem to be of importance to Abraham's servant? Please explain.

What would be the significance of a girl's offering to water his camels as well? In other words, what would this tell us about such a girl?

12. Verse 15 tells us that before the servant finished praying, who arrived?

What does this tell us about God's answering prayers? (See Matthew 6:8.)

If God knows what we need before we ask, then why are we to pray? In other words, what was the significance of the servant's praying if Rebekah was already on her way?

13. Who was Rebekah? How was she related to Abraham?

What was there about Rebekah that caused the servant to notice her?

What is the importance of her being a virgin?

Verse 16 tells us that Rebekah went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again. What does it mean that she went down and then came back up?

14. The servant hurries to Rebekah and asks for a drink of water. What does Rebekah do?

Where was she carrying the jar of water?

What did Rebekah offer to do after the servant had finished drinking?

Read very carefully verse 20. How did Rebekah empty her jar of water into the trough?

How did she go back after more water? What do Rebekah's actions tell us about her?

How much water do you think ten thirsty camels could drink?

15. Verse 21 tells us that the servant watched her very closely. For what is he watching?

When did Rebekah stop watering the camels?

Based on these first impressions, how would you describe her?

How would the servant know if Rebekah was the answer to his prayers?

16. Why do you think Rebekah watered the servant's camels?

After she finished watering the camels, what did the servant give Rebekah?

Can you determine what these items would be worth today?

How do you think Rebekah felt when he gave these items?

Imagine that you come across a thirsty person at a quick stop. You buy him a bottle of water. He drinks deeply, takes off a Rolex watch, and gives it to you. How would you feel? Would you accept it? Please explain.

17. What does the servant ask Rebekah?

What does she reply?

Do you think the servant knows who Nahor is? Please explain.

What do you think the servant is thinking and feeling?

Can you remember a time when God answered one of your prayers very specifically? How did you feel?

Why do you think the servant wants to know if her father has room for him?

18. When Rebekah answers that she is sure her father has room for him, how does the servant respond?

How comfortable are you praising and thanking God in public?

The servant does not respond to Rebekah's offer of hospitality. Instead, he bows down and worships God. What do you think Rebekah is thinking?

The servant thanks God for guiding him. In what way or ways has God guided you?

19. What does Rebekah do?

How do you think her family reacted to this news?

Who was Rebekah's brother? How would you describe him?

Do you think he was influenced by the gold Rebekah received? Please explain. (See verse 30.)

As a matter of fact, what does Laban do?

20. What does Laban say to the servant when he arrives at the well?

How does he refer to the servant? What does this tell you about Laban?

Why do you think Laban, the brother, is the one who speaks to the man and not Rebekah's father?

Is Rebekah's family treating Abraham's servant as a servant? Please explain.

Why do you think they are treating him so nicely? (Remember how Lot and Abraham treated strangers.)

21. What does the servant find once he comes to Rebekah's home?

In verse 32 we learn that the servant was not traveling alone. Does this surprise you? Please explain.

Again, how many camels did the servant have?

We learn that they were now unloaded. What do you think could have been on these camels?

How were the servant's servants treated?

22. What does Abraham's servant do when food is placed before him?

Why do you believe he wants to do this before he does anything else?

What do Laban and his family learn about the servant's mission and about Abraham?

Does the servant accurately relate all the necessary information? What does this mean to you?

How important is it to you to know you can trust someone to tell the truth?

23. What do you think was going through Rebekah's mind as she heard the servant speak?

Finally, in verse 49, the servant comes to the main point. What does he ask of Laban and Bethuel?

24. How do Laban and Bethuel respond to the servant's request?

Based upon their answer, would you consider them to be Godly men? Please explain.

Why do they tell the servant to take Rebekah without even asking her how she felt?

25. What did the servant do when he was told he could take Rebekah back with him?

To whom does the servant give gifts?

Who is the only one who does not receive anything? How would you explain this?

26. The servant wants to return to Abraham the next morning. How would you explain his desire to be in such a hurry?

What do her brother and mother ask?

Why do you think they ask for the 10 day waiting period?

What do you think is the possibility that they will ever see their sister or daughter again? Please explain.

However, the servant does not want to be detained any longer so they decide to leave the decision up to Rebekah. How does she respond?

How do you explain Rebekah's willingness to go without delay?

27. Based upon this chapter, if you had a son, would you be glad to have Rebekah as a daughter-in-law? Please explain.

28. Who or what does the family send with Rebekah?

Why do you think they did not send more with her?

29. Though they do not send many material things with her, the family does give her a blessing. Also, remember that they probably know nothing about the promises God made to Abraham and to Isaac. What do they say about Rebekah in their blessing?

How does her blessing parallel the blessing of Isaac?

What does this tell you?

30. Once again the journey home is covered in one verse. As the servant and Rebekah near "home", what is Isaac doing in verse 63?

Some commentaries tell us that the word translated as "meditate" is uncertain. In other words, the exact meaning is not clear. What do you think Isaac was doing in the field?

Isaac is the first one to see the camels approaching. Do you think he knows the servant's mission? Please explain.

What does Rebekah do when she learns that the man in the distance is her future husband?

Can you learn the significance of the veil?

31. Verse 67 contains a lot of information. According to this verse, what does Isaac do?

What does he do first?

When do you think he fell in love with Rebekah?

At the very end, we may get a clue as to why Abraham was so eager to get a wife for his son. According to this verse, what was that reason?

32. This chapter gives a good insight into how the LORD works in our lives. This episode began with Abraham's sending his servant on a mission, apparently without confiding in

Isaac. The servant finds Rebekah, and her family agrees to send her away. Yet in the end, Rebekah and Isaac come to love each other very much. What can we learn about God and how He works in our lives from this chapter?

Genesis 25

1. Again, we see the passage of time but are given little details. Read verse 1 carefully. What does this verse tell us?

Now read I Chron. 1:32. What does it say about Keturah?

Some people argue that the Bible contains too many "contradictions" to be trusted. We seem to encounter one of these contradictions here. How do you explain the differences between these two verses?

2. Also, by examining carefully the verb "took" we can learn another truth about Bible study: we must be careful about making the Bible say something it does not. Some interpret this verb as meaning that Abraham married Keturah after Sarah died. Others say Abraham married her before Sarah died. Based upon our study so far, what do you think?

Let's look at some details. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?

How old was he when Sarah died?

If he married Keturah after Sarah died, how old would he have been when his other sons were born?

Some say Abraham was too old to beget all these sons at such an advanced age; therefore, he must have married Keturah before Sarah's death. What do you think about this logic?

3. How many sons did Abraham have by Keturah?

How do you explain these additional sons? (Look back at God's promises to Abraham.)

What can you learn about these sons from the following verses and from any further research?

4. Suddenly, in verse 5, we read that Abraham left everything to Isaac. Why is this important?

What did Abraham do for his other sons?

What do you think were the gifts Abraham gave to his sons?

After giving them gifts, what else did Abraham do?

Why do you think he did this?

If you were one of these other sons, how would you have felt?

Do we have any indication that they resented these decisions of their father?

If they were sent to the land of the east, where might these sons have settled?

5. Why do you think "concubines" is plural in verse 6?

What can we learn about Abraham that he would leave everything to Isaac but still had enough to give gifts to his other sons?

6. Let's look back at Abraham's life. How old was he when God called him out of Ur?

How old was he when Ishmael was born?

How old was he when Isaac was born?

How old was he when Sarah died?

How old was he when Isaac married?

How old was he when he died?

How old was Isaac when Abraham died?

7. Verse 8 tells us that Abraham died an old man and full of years. What do you think is meant by the term "full of years"?

What does it mean that Abraham was gathered to his people? Who were his people?

8. Who came to help Isaac bury Abraham?

How long had it been since these two brothers had seen each other?

Why do you think Ishmael returned?

What do you think this meeting was like?

Where are Abraham's other sons?

9. Where was Abraham buried?

How important do you believe this piece of land is? Why?

Where is Abraham and Sarah's tomb located today?

Why are they still fighting over this piece of land?

10. What did God do for Isaac following Abraham's death?

Where was Isaac living at this time?

11. Before continuing with Isaac, the narrative returns to Ishmael one last time. Why do you believe God chose to do this?

How many sons did Ishmael have?

How long did Ishmael live?

Where did his sons settle?

What is the last thing that we are told about Ishmael and his sons?

Why do you believe this is the last statement written about Ishmael?

12. Now the narrative turns to Isaac. How old was Isaac when he married Rebekah?

Why did Isaac pray to God on behalf of his wife?

Abraham was still alive at this time. This time must have been very trying for Abraham because he made a similar prayer to God on behalf of his wife Sarah. If you had been Abraham, what advice would you have given to Isaac?

Why would God make Rebekah barren?

Next, we read that Rebekah became pregnant. However, we need to look more closely at the time involved. How old was Isaac when his son was born? (See verse 26.)

So, how long had Isaac been praying to God on behalf of his wife?

How do you think Isaac had been praying for his wife all this time? In other words, how do picture Isaac during his prayer times?

How long had Abraham prayed for Sarah (beginning with God's original promise)?

Yet, during this time of testing of both men, Isaac differed from his father in one major way. What was it?

Why do you think God waited so long to give Isaac sons and Abraham grandsons?

13. God answered Isaac and Rebekah's prayers. They are blessed with twins. However, what happens that causes Rebekah to be concerned?

Verse 27 states that the children "jostled with each other" in the womb. Other versions state that they "struggled" with each other. What is going on?

Why would this concern Rebekah?

For those who would know, what do you suppose this was like physically for Rebekah?

What does this tell us about these two children even though they are still in the womb?

What question does Rebekah ask because of this struggle between her two children?

14. What does Rebekah decide to do?

What does this tell us about her?

Do you think she told Isaac what was going on? Why do you think this?

15. Verse 23 contains God's answer to Rebekah. What does God tell Rebekah?

What would it mean to you if God told you that you carried in your womb two nations?

What do you think it meant to Rebekah that these two were already struggling?

What are the implications that the older would serve the younger?

This is God's answer. What are Isaac and Rebekah going to have to do to see it happen?

16. Next, we learn that Rebekah gives birth to twin sons. However, they are very different. What was the first-born son like?

What did they name him and what did his name mean?

What was the younger son like?

What did they name him and what does his name mean?

Why did they give him this name?

17. The differences between the two brothers continued as they grew. Describe Esau as he grew into a young man.

Describe Jacob.

What would you say was the biggest difference between the two brothers?

18. Verse 28 is a short verse but a very important one. What do we learn from this verse?

Why did Isaac prefer his son Esau?

Why did Rebekah prefer her son Jacob?

What effect might this preferential treatment by both parents have on the two sons?

At this time, does it seem the two sons have anything in common? Please explain.

19. What are the two brothers doing in verse 29?

How would you react, as a father, to find that your son is home cooking?

What does verse 29 tell us about Esau?

Some versions tell us that Esau was famished; others that he was faint. Can you identify with Esau's condition? Please explain.

How did Esau become famished?

Can you remember a time when you were hungry and you walked into a room only to smell a delicious meal being cooked in the kitchen? What happened?

20. If you had worked hard preparing a meal and your brother came home, famished, and asked for something to eat, what would you do?

What does Esau ask of Jacob?

What was Jacob's answer?

What do you think of Jacob based upon his answer?

What was Esau's answer?

What do you think of Esau based upon his answer?

21. Why would Jacob want to buy his brother's birthright? In other words, why was the birthright so important?

Was Jacob being devious in offering to "buy" Esau's birthright? Please explain.

Read John 6:63. How do Jesus' words relate to this story of Jacob and Esau?

Can you think of a modern example of a person selling his or her spiritual birthright for the pleasures of the flesh?

22. Read verse 32. Briefly summarize Esau's reasoning in selling his birthright.

How do people use this same reasoning today to explain that they do not need what God offers?

23. Why does Jacob want Esau to swear an oath before giving him some stew?

Now, how would describe Esau?

How would you describe Jacob?

24. Verse 34 tells us that Esau despised his birthright. What does this mean?

In what way did Esau despise his birthright?

How do you think God would react to someone who sold his birthright for a bowl of soup?

25. Look back at what God told Rebekah concerning her sons. Was Jacob right in buying the birthright based upon what God had said? Please explain.

Do you believe this is what God had in mind when he told Rebekah?

Do you think Rebekah told Jacob about God's prophecy concerning his future? If so, how might this have affected Jacob as he grew into a young man?

26. This event was very serious. Look at Phil 3:19. What does this verse mean to you, especially after reading this account?

Read Heb 12:16. What does this say about Esau?

Why is Esau a godless man?

Genesis 26

1. Again, we read of a famine in the land. Several times God has used natural events to move people into their proper position. Can you list some of these times when God has done just that?

Can you think of a modern example of such an event?

2. Why do you think we are told that this is not the same famine of Abraham's time?

During that earlier famine, where did Abraham go to survive?

Do you think Isaac knew about this?

To whom does Isaac go?

3. Why do you think God told Isaac not to go to Egypt?

Isaac knows there is a famine in the land. Now God tells him not to leave that area. What would you be thinking?

What does God tell Isaac?

If we are not careful, we might read right past one of God's miracles. God tells Isaac to stay in this land where there is a famine. What does God say He will do?

What do you think others would think that Isaac would prosper in the midst of a famine?

4. In verses 3-4 God reiterates His promise to Isaac. Why do you think He does this?

According to verse 5, why did this promise pass from Abraham to Isaac?

Have you ever viewed your actions as having an affect on your children's spiritual future?

Is it possible that a promise of God might depend upon your obedience? How does this make you feel?

5. Isaac stays in Gerar. Where is Gerar located?

6. Now we read a story that is very familiar to us. What does Isaac do that is very reminiscent of his father Abraham?

What did the men of that area do that caused Isaac to tell this lie?

According to verse 8, how long had Isaac been with the Philistines and Abimelech?

What was the danger for Rebekah during this time?

Not able to stay away from his wife, what did Isaac do?

What do you think Abimelech thought when he saw Isaac and Rebekah together?

7. Once again we see how children learn from their parents. Do you hold Abraham responsible for Isaac's actions? Please explain.

How do you explain Isaac's actions after God had promised to take care of him and prosper him?

8. In verse 10, Abimelech stated that "one" of the men might have slept with Rebekah. What do you think he meant by "one" of the men?

What do you think Abimelech meant that such an act would have brought guilt upon them?

Do you think this is the same Abimelech who went through a similar event with Abraham? (Note: how much time has elapsed between Abraham's visit and Isaac's?)

What decision does Abimelech make?

What do you think he is thinking about this young man Isaac?

9. Remember, they are in a famine. What does Isaac do?

How do you explain his hundredfold return?

What would this mean for Isaac and his followers during this famine?

How do you think this affected Abimelech and the surrounding people?

10. As a result of God's blessing, what happened to Isaac?

What do you think the Philistines were envious of?

Why do you think the Philistines did not attack Isaac and take some of his food?

Instead of attacking Isaac, what did the Philistines do?

Why do you think they did this?

Can you think of an example where people today actually hurt themselves in an attempt to punish their enemies?

11. What does Abimelech tell Isaac to do?

Read Prov. 27:4. How does this verse relate to Abimelech's actions?

Why do you think Isaac left?

Where does Isaac go and what does he do once he gets there?

What is the significance of Isaac's giving the wells the same name as his father Abraham gave them?

12. Verse 19 tells us that Isaac's servants discovered a new well of fresh water. How important would this have been?

What happened after they discovered this well?

Why do you think Isaac left that well instead of defending it?

What did he name the well?

13. What did Isaac do after abandoning the previous well?

What do you think Isaac said to his family when they wondered why they had to dig another well?

What happened when they struck fresh water the second time?

What did Isaac name this well?

Isaac moves again and digs a third well. What happens this time?

What does he name this well?

Look again at the names of each of the wells Isaac dug. What do you think God is teaching him?

What can we learn from this?

14. According to verse 23, where does Isaac settle?

The LORD appears to Isaac there. What does God say to him?

Had you been Isaac, what would be the difference between your father telling you about God's promises and your hearing them from God Himself?

15. What does Isaac decide to do?

Why do you think he built an altar?

What is the significance of their building a well at the same place?

16. Then, as happened to his father Abraham, Abimelech pays Isaac a visit. Whom does he bring with him?

Why do you think he brought these two with him?

What question does Isaac ask Abimelech?

In what way was Abimelech hostile toward Isaac?

What was Abimelech's answer? In other words, what was he after and why?

What was Isaac's response?

What might have happened had Isaac chosen to hold a grudge and not make peace?

17. The last two verses are very interesting. The focus shifts to Esau. What did Esau do?

What affect did his actions have on Isaac and Rebekah?

Why do you think Isaac and Rebekah reacted this way? Remember, what were Abraham's instructions concerning Isaac and marriage?

What does this tell you about Esau?

Genesis 27

1. Many years have passed. What does verse 1 tell us about Isaac?

Why does he call for Esau and not for Jacob?

Knowing that his days are numbered, what does Isaac want to do?

Why do you think he asked Esau to prepare a meal for him using wild game?

In what way or ways are Isaac's actions similar to Esau's?

2. Isaac wants to give Esau the blessing that belongs to him as the firstborn. What can you learn about this blessing?

What does it mean to you for a father to give a blessing to his son?

Does this mean Isaac did not have a blessing for Jacob? Please explain.

Do you think fathers today can still give **A** blessing to their sons? To their daughters? If so, why do you think more do not?

3. Look back at Genesis 25:23. Do you think Rebekah told Isaac about this prophecy? Please explain. What does this verse say?

If Isaac knew what God had said, why do you think Isaac was going to give the blessing to Esau and not to Jacob?

4. Now it is time for a pure opinion question. Briefly describe this family that is the beginning of God's chosen people.
5. Verse 5 tells us that Rebekah heard what Isaac said to Esau. Do you believe this was an accident or was intentional eavesdropping? Please explain.

Knowing what God said about her two sons and favoring Jacob over Esau, what do you think went through Rebekah's mind when she heard that Isaac was going to bless Esau?

6. Believing time is running out, Rebekah decides to take matters into her own hands. What does she tell Jacob that Isaac is going to do?

What is her plan?

For those of you who cook, is it possible to make two goats taste like wild game? If so, what does this tell us about Rebekah?

Does Rebekah seem to exhibit any remorse or hesitation when devising this plan?

What does the phrase "the end justifies the means" mean to you? What is the "end" that Rebekah is using to "justify the means"?

Can you think of any situation where the ends would justify the means? Please explain.

7. How do you explain Rebekah's favoring Jacob over Esau?

Why do you believe God remains silent on this subject?

8. Read verse 10. What is Jacob's main objection to his mother's plan?

What does this tell us about Jacob?

Jacob seems to understand the power of his father's blessing. Yet, he does not seem to mind deceiving Isaac. How do you explain this?

What is Jacob's greatest fear if he is caught?

What does this tell us about the power of blessings and curses?

Read Deuteronomy 27:18. How does this verse illustrate Jacob's fear?

This verse shows us that God's law existed long before He "gave" the law to Moses. What does this mean to you?

9. How does Rebekah calm her son's fears?

What does she have Jacob do to fool her husband?

How do Jacob and Rebekah plan on imitating Esau's hairy nature?

Now, how do you picture Esau?

10. Now comes the moment of truth. Jacob approaches his father with his meal. What does Isaac ask when he hears his son?

What does Jacob answer?

What do you think of Jacob, who lies to his father in order to gain a blessing?

11. Isaac is a little suspicious. What does he ask Jacob?

Look carefully at Jacob's answer in verse 20. What makes this lie so bad?

Why do you think Jacob did not mind using God to give credence to his lie?

Why do you think God does not intervene?

12. Verse 21 is very interesting. Why do you think Isaac wants to touch his son to see if he is really Esau?

What does Isaac think of his son Jacob?

Why might Isaac be suspicious?

What do you think Jacob was thinking as he walked over to his father?

Even after touching Jacob, Isaac has doubts. What troubles him?

What finally convinces Isaac that he is speaking to his son Esau?

However, once again, Isaac asks Jacob, "Are you really my son Esau?" He understands the power of the blessing he is going to give, and he obviously wants to give it to Esau. How do you think this made Jacob feel?

Do you think Jacob is feeling nervous or justified? Please explain.

13. What do you think is going through Jacob's mind as his father ate the meal and drank the wine?

After the meal, Isaac asks for a kiss from his son. Why do you think he does this?

What finally convinces Isaac that Esau is standing before him?

What do you think Isaac means when he says he smells the smell of the open fields?

14. Now comes the blessing, the blessing that both sons so earnestly desired. What was the first part of the blessing?

Why do you think Isaac began by asking God to bless his son with the dew of heaven?

The rest of the blessing seems quite short. List the four parts of this blessing.

How does this blessing mirror God's blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12:3?

Look carefully at all Isaac prayed over his son. Which part or parts was Jacob most desiring?

15. Look back at what God spoke to Rebekah concerning her two sons while they were still in the womb. This blessing is in line with God's words. Were Rebekah and Jacob justified in deceiving Isaac to gain this blessing? Please explain.

Read Romans 9:10-12. What do these verses mean to you?

16. As soon as Jacob receives the blessing, he leaves. Why?

What does Esau say to his father as he presents the meal?

What is Isaac's reaction when Esau tells Isaac who he is? (See verse 33.)

What does Esau realize as he listens to his father?

What does it mean to you that Esau let out a "loud and bitter cry?"

What did Esau ask Isaac to do?

What was Isaac's answer?

What does it mean to you that Jacob will still be blessed even though he did it by deceiving his father?

17. What does Esau say about his brother in verse 36?

According to Esau, how had Jacob deceived him twice?

Had Jacob deceived him twice? Please explain.

Based upon his accusations, what might Esau have told his father about how Jacob came to have his birthright?

Of this family, who seems to be the most honest?

18. When asked if he saved even one blessing for Esau, what does Isaac say?

What does it mean to you when Isaac says "I have made..." and "I have guaranteed..."?
What does this tell you about the power of Isaac's blessing?

Esau continues to beg for a blessing. Finally, how does Isaac bless him?

What does this "blessing" mean to you?

Read Hebrews 12:17. What does this tell us about Esau?

19. What was the result of Jacob's stealing his brother's blessing?

What does it mean to you that we will reap what we sow? In what ways are Jacob and Rebekah reaping what they had sown?

Do you think Esau truly wanted to kill Jacob?

When does Esau plan on killing his brother?

Verse 42 tells us that someone learned what Esau was plotting and told Rebekah. What do you think was really going on?

Once again, Rebekah takes matters into her own hands. What does she tell Jacob to do?

Why send him to Laban?

What do you think she means when she says, "Why should I lose both of you in one day?"
(See *Genesis* 9:6.)

20. What does Rebekah say to her husband in verse 46?

Why do you think she said this to him?

Is she still trying to deceive her husband? Please explain.

21. What have you learned about raising a family from this chapter?

What have you learned about the power of a blessing?

What have you learned about the promises of God?

Genesis 28

1. All right. What is done is done. Isaac has given a blessing to both of his sons, maybe not the way he wanted, but it is done. Following the deceptions and the giving of the blessings, what does Isaac do for his son Jacob?

What instructions does he give Jacob?

Why do you think Isaac gave these instructions to Jacob and not to Esau?

What do you think is Isaac's main purpose in sending Jacob away?

What other reasons might he have in doing so?

Do you think Rebekah had any input into this course of action?

2. Look carefully at verses 3 and 4. What is contained in this blessing?

What does Isaac say over his son this time that was not in the other blessing?

What was different about the giving of this blessing as opposed to the first blessing?

3. What does Esau do when he learns about Isaac's instructions to Jacob?

Why do you think he did this?

Again, we get an insight into Esau's nature. To please his father, what does Esau decide to do?

What did he hope to accomplish by marrying Mahalath?

4. Time for a little review. Who was Ishmael?

What was "wrong" about Esau's choosing as a wife a descendant of Ishmael?

What does this tell us about Esau's understanding of the covenant the LORD made with Abraham?

People still try to please others and even God by "doing the right thing." Can you give an example of this type of behavior?

Why did Esau's decision not please Isaac?

Read Hosea 6:6 and Matthew 9:13. How do these verses relate to Esau's actions?

What meaning do these verses hold for us?

5. Let us return to verse 7. It states that Jacob obeyed his father. Considering all that he had done to deceive his father, what does this verse mean to you?

Read the parable in Matthew 21:28-33. Does this verse relate to Jacob in any way? Please explain.

What can we learn about pleasing God from the actions of these two sons?

6. As Jacob leaves his home and sets out for Haran, what do you believe he was thinking and feeling? (Remember, his brother has vowed to kill him.)

This is the son of the promise of God. What is his bed? What is his pillow? What is the significance of this?

Verse 11 tells us that when he had reached a "certain place" that he stopped for the night. Why do you think God does not tell us the name of this place?

7. What did Jacob dream that night?

What is the importance of the "stairway" going from the earth to the heavens with angels ascending and descending?

The LORD Himself appears to Jacob. What does the LORD tell him?

Had you been Jacob, what would have meant the most to you at this time?

How does God "introduce" Himself to Jacob? Why do you think God did not say, "I am your God"?

Before we said that it was very possible that Jacob did not have a fear of the LORD. Do you believe that he does now? Please explain.

8. What goes through Jacob's mind when he awakes?

What does it mean when he acknowledges that God was in that place but he did not know it?

Can you remember a time when you realized that God was in a place but that you were not aware of it? Please explain.

What was the result of Jacob's encounter with God? (See verse 17.)

We read that Jacob was afraid of God. This same word is used to describe the "fear" of the LORD. What does it mean to you to fear the LORD?

Read Deu. 6:1-2. What part does fearing the LORD have in obeying God?

What is the relationship between fear of God and praising God?

How has this fear of God changed Jacob?

9. What does Jacob say when he wakes?

Can you remember ever saying, "How awesome is this place"? Please explain.

What does Jacob do?

What are some of the acts that we do to commemorate or bless a particular place? Why do this?

What name does Jacob give the place?

What does it mean?

10. What vow does Jacob make to God?

Jacob begins by saying "if". Was he making a bargain with God? Please explain.

This vow contains an "if...then" construction. The "if" applies to God and the "then" to Jacob. What does Jacob want God to do?

If God does this, what will Jacob do?

How do you react to this vow?

How effective are "foxhole" prayers, prayers that state, "God, if You will ..., then I will serve you"?

The real issue is how God reacts to such vows. Does God react to Jacob's conditional vow? Why or why not?

What does this show us about God?

11. Based upon this one episode, how would you say Jacob has changed?

Why do you think God never mentions to Jacob his deception of his father?

What does it mean to you that God still desired to use Jacob?

Genesis 29

1. For the first time in his life, Jacob finds himself on his own. What advice would you give Jacob or any young person who was leaving home for the first time?

Following his encounter with the LORD, Jacob continues his journey. The word for continues literally means "to lift up" as in "Jacob lifted up his feet." What is the significance of using this verb to describe Jacob's resuming his journey?

Can you remember a time when you did not feel like you could take one more step? Please explain.

How were you able to take that next step?

2. Now we learn a little more about their way of life. When Jacob arrives, he goes to the well. Why?

What did Jacob see when he came upon the well?

Why was there a stone covering the mouth of the well?

Can you learn what this well possibly looked like?

Why do you think these three shepherds were waiting instead of watering their sheep immediately?

How willing are we to wait upon others before satisfying our needs?

How does Jacob's arrival at the well mirror Abraham's servant's arrival years before?

3. What does Jacob ask the shepherds?

During this conversation, who approaches the well?

Do you think it strange that Laban's daughter would be keeping the flock? Please explain.

What do you think Jacob was feeling when they announced that Rachel was Laban's daughter?

How many "coincidences" can you identify in Jacob's journey so far that clearly show us that God is directing Jacob's steps?

4. What does Jacob want to do as Rachel approaches?

What was the custom surrounding the rolling away of the stone?

Not wanting to wait, what does Jacob do?

What does this tell you about the size of the stone?

What was involved in the watering of the sheep?

What do you believe Rachel was thinking as this stranger watered her sheep?

5. Compare Jacob's actions now with Rachel with his actions earlier with Esau. How are they different?

Has Jacob changed and, if so, how?

What might have caused this change, if any, in Jacob?

6. How does Jacob introduce himself?

How is Rachel related to Rebekah? To Jacob?

Why do you think Jacob does tell his name?

What does Rachel do when she learns Jacob is family?

How does Laban receive Jacob?

7. Verse 14 tells us that Jacob had been with Laban one month. According to the customs of pastoral people, a stranger was welcomed for three days. On the fourth day, he was expected to give his name and his reason for coming. What do you think of such a custom?

If the errand required the person to stay longer than four days, the visitor was expected to work in some way. What do you think of this custom? Please explain.

How do our customs differ from these?

After Jacob works for a month, what does Laban say?

Why do you think Laban asks Jacob instead of telling him?

Why is Jacob interested in negotiating a "wage"? In other words, how long does he plan on working for Laban?

Jacob will inherit all that his father Isaac has. Yet, he is working for Laban for no wages. How would this make you feel?

8. What were the names of Laban's daughters?

What does it say about Leah? About Rachel?

What do you think it means that Leah had "weak eyes"?

Because Jacob was in love with Rachel, what did he set as his wages?

Why do you think Jacob simply did not ask for Rachel's hand in marriage like Abraham's servant did with Rebekah?

9. What was Laban's answer?

How do we know Jacob really loved Rachel?

Why do you think we are not told how Rachel feels about Jacob?

Can you think of an advantage of having to work and to wait for something we truly want?

10. Jacob works for seven years. What does he say to Laban at the end of that time?

What does Laban do?

What do you believe Rachel and Jacob were thinking during the feast?

11. At this point, Jacob, the deceiver, is himself deceived. What does the father Laban do?

Do you think Leah knew what her father was going to do? Please explain.

How do you think it possible that Jacob did not know that it was Leah?

Who was Zilpah?

12. Talk about the morning after.... What do you think Jacob was feeling when he awoke next to Leah?

How was his situation similar to what he had done to his brother Esau?

What does Jacob say to his father-in-law?

Why must Jacob control his anger toward Laban?

How were Laban's actions similar to Jacob's actions of seven years before?

13. How does Laban justify his deceitfulness?

Does Laban feel he has done anything wrong? Please explain.

At this point, do you think Jacob feels he has done anything wrong?

What is ironic about the younger is not to be placed before the older?

14. What is Laban's "solution" to Jacob's situation?

When will Jacob marry Rachel? Total, how many years did Laban exact from Jacob?

Do you feel sorry for Jacob? Please explain.

What do you think this family will be like, with Jacob marrying two sisters?

Read Lev. 18:18. Why do you think the LORD gave this instruction to Israel?

What do you think that week was like for Leah?

What do you think Jacob learned during these 14 years?

Who was Bilhah?

15. Verse 30 contains a very interesting statement. It tells us that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Verse 31 reads that Leah was not loved. Other versions state that she was hated. What do you think life was like for Leah? For Rachel? For Jacob?

What type of relationship do you think Jacob had with his father-in-law?

16. Up to this point, we have not "heard" from the LORD. Does this mean God condoned what had take place? Please explain.

Verse 31 tells us that the LORD knew what was happening. What did He do when saw that Jacob did not love Leah as much as Rachel?

What did she name her first-born son?

What do you think she meant when she said the LORD has seen her misery?
What does Leah hope when she gives birth to Jacob's first son?

Jacob still does not love Leah, so God gives her a second son. What is his name and what does it mean?

What was the name of her third son and what does it mean?

What was the name of her fourth son and what does it mean?

How many years have they been married?

What do you think Rachel was feeling during this time?

17. After her fourth son, Leah stopped having children. Did Jacob ever come to love his wife Leah?

What type of relationship do you think Jacob had with his sons?

This is interesting. Jacob received the blessing through deception. Leah becomes Jacob's wife through deception. Yet, through which son does God chose to carry the promise of Abraham?

What does this mean to you?

18. How does God reveal His will so we can learn what He likes and does not?

What have you learned about families from this chapter?

Genesis 30

1. Once again we see jealousy take root in a family. What do think would cause brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers to become jealous of one another?

What advice would you give to help others avoid jealousy?

2. In the last chapter, we read that God took notice of Leah and blessed her with four sons. This had to cover about three or four years. If you were Rachel, what would you have been feeling?

In a situation such as this, how could you avoid feeling that the LORD had abandoned you?

According to verse 1, how did these events affect Rachel?

What does she say to Jacob?

Why does she turn to Jacob?

3. How does Jacob react?

What does Jacob say to Rachel?

How would you explain his reaction?

How accurate is Jacob's statement?

4. Now, we are seeing history repeat itself. What is Rachel's solution to her problem?

According to her statement, how would you say Jacob's statement about God affected Rachel?

Why do you think she did not turn to God?

5. With Sarah and Rebekah we have seen God close their wombs until His time arrived. The same appears to be happening again. What happens when Jacob sleeps with Rachel's maid Bilhah?

Why do you think God closed Rachel's womb but opened Bilhah's?

What does Rebekah say when her maid gives her a son?

What does she name him?

Obviously, because Rachel was successful the first time, she has Jacob sleep with Bilhah again, and she bears him another son. What do they name him and why?

How many sons does Jacob now have?

6. It seems the pendulum has swung in Rachel's favor. Therefore, what does Leah decide to do?

How many sons does Zilpah bear?

What are their names and what do they mean?

We have asked this question before about other families: what do you think life in Jacob's household would be like? Please explain.

7. Then, one day, Reuben, the oldest, was outside during the wheat harvest. What does Reuben, who was around 4 or 5, find?

What are mandrake roots and for what were they used?

Why does Rachel want them?

What does this tell us about Rachel?

How does Leah respond to Rachel's request?

What do you think she meant by accusing Rachel of taking away her husband?

8. Rachel makes a deal with Leah. What was it?

What can we learn about the relationship between these three from this agreement?

9. Where do you think Leah and Rachel gained their belief in mandrakes?

What does it tell us that these two "wives" placed more faith in mandrakes than in the LORD?

We know that these two women are going to give birth to the twelve tribes of Israel. What conclusions can you draw about their relationships with the LORD?

What does this reveal to us about God, Who would use them despite their reliance upon "mandrakes" and their jealousies?

10. Verse 16 tells us that Jacob learned about this arrangement when he came home. What does this tell us about Jacob, that he was not even involved in this discussion?

Can you think of a time when you thought the best way to handle a situation was to stay out of it? Did it work?

What does Leah mean when she says she has "hired" her husband with her son's mandrakes?

Why do you think she does not say with the mandrakes of "our" son?

What does Jacob do?

11. We have seen this family operate in deception, jealousy, and idolatry. Yet what does verse 17 tell us?

This may be a difficult idea to grasp, but why do you think God continues to listen to Leah, who rented her husband for mandrakes?

What is Leah's response after she becomes pregnant?

What does she name her fifth son and what does the name mean?

12. Leah gives birth to a sixth son. What does Leah say about this son?

What does she name him and what does the name mean?

What can you learn from these names about how parents chose names for their children?

13. Verse 21 tells us that Leah gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah. Why do you think we are not given the meaning of her name?

Why do you think we do not hear any more about Dinah?

What do you think life was like for her being raised with 12 brothers from 4 different women?

14. Verse 22 tells us that God remembered Rachel. What do you think this means?

After all these years, what does God do for Rachel?

What is the name of Rachel's son and what does it mean?

Why did she give him this name?

What do you think Rachel was feeling finally to give birth herself?

15. Jacob now has 11 sons. List their names and their meanings.

Look at the meaning of the names. Can you see anything significant in them?

16. Verse 25 tells us that it came to pass. In other words, a period of time has passed. Jacob has worked for Laban long enough. What does he say to Laban?

If Jacob has worked his 14 years, why do you think he asks Laban if he can leave?

What does Jacob want to do?

17. What is Laban's response?

How has Laban "discovered" that God has favored Jacob?

Why has the Lord blessed Laban?

Would you consider Laban to be a Godly man? Please explain.

How would you feel if you worked for a man who did not fear God and his main reason for keeping you was to gain God's blessings?

Read Matthew 5:43-48. What does this passage mean to you and does it apply to this situation?

18. Laban wants Jacob to stay so much that he tells Jacob to name his own wages. How would you feel if your boss said this to you?

What would be the temptation?

Can you imagine being so blessed by God that people tell you to name your own wages just so you would work for them? Can we still be such a blessing? Please explain.

19. Jacob begins by stating some facts. What does he say in verses 29 and 30?

Is your place of work better off since you have been working there? Please explain.

According to Jacob's answer (see verse 30), what is his concern?

Are Jacob's concerns reasonable?

Why do you think Jacob wants something for his own household when he stands to inherit a double portion from his father Isaac?

20. Now begins a type of negotiation between Jacob and Laban. How does Laban respond to Jacob's concern?

Why do you think he does not respond with a more precise answer?

Surprisingly, Jacob says that he does not want anything. Instead, what answer does he give Laban?

Suppose you had a job in a new company that God tells you will become very prosperous. Would you consider not taking a salary in exchange for a share in the business? Please explain.

Why do you believe Jacob chose to take the spotted or speckled sheep and goats?

Why do you think Laban so readily agreed?

21. In verse 30 Jacob says that Laban should believe him because of his honesty. The word for honesty also means "righteousness." Do you consider Jacob a righteousness man? Please explain.

How is Laban going to tell if Jacob remains righteous?

How can people tell if we are remaining righteous?

22. Laban agrees to Jacob's terms, and the two men reach an agreement. During the past 14 years, has Jacob changed? Please explain.

During that same period of time, has Laban changed? Please explain.

If you were Jacob, would you trust Laban? Please explain.

Following the agreement, verse 35 states that "he" removed the sheep the same day. That "he" is Laban. Why do you think Laban separated Jacob's sheep from his sheep immediately?

To whom does Laban give Jacob's sheep to care for them?

Why was Jacob not allowed to tend his own flock?

Then, Laban tells his sons to put a 3-day journey between Jacob's flock and his flocks. Why?

Briefly summarize Laban's actions and his reasons.

If you were Jacob, what would be thinking? Do you think Jacob was surprised by his father-in-law's actions? Please explain.

Read Proverbs 13:11. How does it apply to this situation?

Read Psalm 37:1-4. How does this apply to Jacob's situation?

Have you ever had to put your trust in either of these two scriptures? Please explain (but without naming names).

23. Despite Laban's actions, Jacob has a plan of his own. What does Jacob do?

Can you find any logical explanation behind Jacob's plan?

Where do you think he came up with this plan?

What was the result of Jacob's plan with the peeled branches?

Whom do you believe was behind Jacob's prosperity?

Can you think of a time when the Lord gave you a plan that seemed foolish to the flesh but proved to be fruitful in its execution?

24. What does verse 43 tell us about Jacob and his relationship with Laban?

25. What are some of the changes that you have seen take place in Jacob during his time away from home?

Genesis 31

1. With God's guidance, Jacob becomes a wealthy man, while continuing to care for Laban's flocks. Jacob's sons' inheritance grows while Laban's sons' inheritance dwindles. According to what Jacob heard, what were Laban's sons saying about Jacob?

What do you think is driving their comments?

Imagine your family owns a lot of land. You lease some of it to a poor but hardworking family. Soon, they plant the same crops you have planted, but you notice that their land is producing more per acre than your land. Before long, this "poor" family is selling twice as much as your family and is even interested in buying the land. How would feel and why?

The key word in the first verse is "heard" because Jacob and Laban are separated by a three day journey. How do you think Jacob heard these reports?

These reports can be considered rumors or gossip. Did Jacob have a right to know what his brothers-in-law were saying about him? Please explain.

2. According to verse 2, what had Jacob noticed about his father-in-law?

What might be the reason that his disposition concerning Jacob has changed? When he first made the agreement about the sheep, what did Laban expect to happen?

Read Proverbs 14:10 and Proverbs 27:4. How do these verses relate to Jacob's situation?

Can you tell when someone's countenance toward you has changed? Please explain.

In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Brutus says about his friend Cassius, "You have described a hot friend cooling." What do you think he meant?

3. Jacob receives another visit from the LORD. What does the LORD tell him?

How eager do you think Jacob was to return to his family and home?

How long has he been away?

4. What does Jacob do next?

Why do you think he wanted his wives to join him in the fields where the flocks were?

What does Jacob say to them in verse 5?

Why do you think he refers to God as "the God of my Father" ?

What accusation does Jacob make about Laban in verses 6 and 7?

Is what Jacob saying about his father-in-law true? Please explain.

Why has Jacob prospered even under Laban's devious ways?

5. Read verses 8 and 9. What is Jacob telling his wives?

According to Jacob, who was directly responsible for their prosperity?

Why do you think Jacob did not share this information with his wives earlier?

Specifically, what did the angel of the LORD tell Jacob in his dream?

If you were one of Jacob's wives, how might this revelation affect you?

As the husband, Jacob could have simply told Leah and Rachel to pack up because they were leaving. Why do you think he did not do so?

What does the Bible say about husbands and wives making decisions? Please explain.

6. How did Leah and Rachel respond to Jacob's news?

What was the major reason they were willing to leave?

What do you think they mean when they say their father sold them and used up all the money?

7. At the end of all this time, how would describe Laban's relationship with Jacob? With his daughters?

What is the main cause for these relationships?

What can parents learn from Laban's behavior?

8. Jacob decides not to say anything to Laban about leaving. Why?

Would you describe Jacob as a wealthy man? Please explain.

The Bible specifically tells us that Jacob drove off only his livestock. Why is this important?

How long do you think it would have taken Jacob to prepare his family to leave?

Why did Laban not learn about their departure?

9. Verse 19 is very interesting. What did Rachel do while her father was out shearing sheep?

What does this tell us about Laban, that he would have household idols?

Now, for the big question: why do you think Rachel stole the teraphim or household gods?

This is interesting. Verse 19 says Rachel stole her father's idols. Verse 20 says Jacob deceived Laban by not telling Laban he was leaving. The word for "stole" and for "deceived" is the same word: *ganab*. *Ganab* literally means to steal away or to thief. What does it mean to you that the Bible uses such a strong word to describe both Jacob and Rachel?

What does it tell you about Rachel that she would steal household idols?

Also, in what way does Rachel deceive her husband?

Verse 21 tells us that Jacob fled. The word for *fled* means to run away. When we look at the Hebrew words used to describe Jacob's actions - to steal away and to run away - did Jacob make the right decision? Please explain.

Look again at what God promised Jacob in verse 3. Because of this promise, what should Jacob have done?

10. Verse 21 tells us that Jacob crossed the river. What river was that?

How long did it take Laban to discover Jacob had fled?

What do you think were his first thoughts?

Whom does he take with him?

How long does it take Laban to overtake Jacob?

Verse 23 tells us that Laban caught Jacob in the hill country of *Gilead*. Can you locate this on a map?

11. Now the LORD appears to Laban in a dream. What does God tell Laban?

What do you think Laban intended to do when he caught Jacob?

Why do you think God told Laban not to say anything instead of not to harm Jacob?

12. Finally, the two men meet. What does Laban, both father and grandfather, say to Jacob?

Laban launches into a series of accusations against Jacob. Laban asks one question after another but does not wait for an answer. How might you respond if someone did the same to you?

According to Laban, what was he ready to do if Jacob had only told him they wanted to leave?

Do you believe him?

Laban goes through a series of offenses: Jacob left secretly, Jacob did not allow him to say goodbye to his daughters, and Jacob kept him from kissing his grandchildren farewell. Laban then tells Jacob that he has the power to harm, but he will not. Why?

What is the last accusation he makes to Jacob?

Of all that Laban said, what do you think was truly behind his anger?

13. What is Jacob's answer concerning Laban's daughters?

Why might Jacob have been afraid Laban would take his wives away by force?

Next, Jacob addresses Laban's charge that they stole his household idols. What claim does Jacob make?

What does Jacob say should happen to the one who stole the idols?

Why would Jacob make such a strong statement against the "thief"?

To prove his innocence, what does Jacob suggest Laban do?

What do you think Rachel was feeling as her father and those with him started searching for the idols?

Why do you think Rachel did not simply tell the truth?

14. Interestingly, where does Laban begin searching?

What does this tell us about Laban and what he thought of Jacob's statement?

Where does Laban go after searching Jacob's tent?

Earlier, we said that Jacob was a deceiver. Well, he has fallen in love with a like-minded woman. Rachel knows that Laban will search her tent. Before he gets there, what does she do with the idols?

Where was Rachel as her father was searching her tent?

What reason does she give for not standing in her father's presence?

How do you think Laban was feeling as he could not find his idols?

15. In what ways does this episode with Rachel and her father mirror the episode with Jacob and Esau?

In what way or ways has Rachel reaped what she has sown? Has Jacob? Has Laban?

16. How would you define righteous anger?

Why do you believe Jacob grew angry when Laban found nothing?

What does the Bible tell us about anger? (See Psalm 4:4; Eph 4:26; James 1:19-20.)

Was Jacob's anger justified? Please explain.

Can you give an example of righteous anger? Of man's anger?

17. Verse 36 tells us that Jacob took Laban to task. Other versions say that he chided Laban. The word for "take to task" or "chided" is a legal term that means "to conduct a case or suit". So, Jacob is now going to present his case for becoming angry. With what rhetorical questions does he begin?

Next, Jacob wants to see evidence that he has committed a crime or sinned against Laban. What evidence does Laban have?

In verses 38-41 Jacob presents his case. Specifically, what evidence of his faithfulness and honesty does Jacob present to Laban?

Following his case, what does Jacob say saved him from harm and from leaving empty-handed?

What do you think he meant by the "Fear of Isaac"?

In verse 42 Jacob states that God has protected. Then he states that God rebuked Laban the night before. How did Jacob know that?

18. Laban has lost the case. What do you think he meant when he said, "All that you see is mine"?

Because he can do nothing, Laban wants to make a covenant with Jacob. What do they use as a "witness" and a reminder of their covenant?

Notice in verse 45 that Jacob encouraged all his relatives to gather stones. Why did he do this?

What name did Laban give the heap of stones? What does it mean?

What name did Jacob give it? What does it mean?

Laban states that the stones would be a witness between Jacob and him. Therefore, what other name was the place given?

Do we use monuments to remind us of covenants or agreements today? If so, can you give an example?

19. Laban gives voice to the covenant. Why is God to be a witness between them?

What does Laban not want Jacob to do concerning his daughters?

In what way does God serve as a witness when we make an agreement?

Does God's being a witness help you keep your word? Please explain.

What significance does the pillar hold for both Laban and Jacob?

Why do you think Laban would enter into a covenant with his son-in-law that states they will not harm each other?

20. Both men take an oath. In verse 53, whose name does Laban use to take the oath?

Whose name does Jacob use to take the oath?

Look carefully at Laban's words. Who was the "god" of Abraham, of Abraham's father, and of Abraham's grandfather?

Who was the God of Isaac?

What would you say is the biggest difference between these two men?

Why do you think God wanted Jacob to return to his family and to the land of his fathers?

21. What does Jacob do to seal the covenant?

What do you think the mood was like at the dinner? Please explain.

What do you think Rachel was feeling during this time?

Before he left, what did Laban do?

22. Laban serves as the perfect example of a person who sees the benefits of associating with the followers of Jesus but does not desire a personal relationship with Him. Without giving names, have you ever encountered such a person?

What can you learn from this chapter about how to deal with them?

Why do you think Jacob never tried to "lead" Laban to the LORD?

23. Looking back at this chapter, what major changes have you seen occur in Jacob?

What would you say is the biggest change and why?

The chapter seems to end on a good note, with Laban and Jacob parting in peace. However, Rachel did steal the idols. Why do you think that was not mentioned again?

Genesis 32

1. How would you describe your walk with the Lord? Please explain.
2. Jacob has just left one difficult situation, and now he faces another. What do you think he was feeling?

Jacob must have been having conflicting feelings. He wanted to return home, but he was also reluctant. Why?

How long has Jacob been gone?

Do you think it shows a lack of faith on Jacob's part that he "fears" returning home? Please explain.

Do you think he has shared with his wives and children what happened with Esau?

3. Verse 1 tells us that the angels of God met Jacob as he continued on his way, but it does not tell us why. Why do you think God sent His angels to meet with Jacob?

Why do you think He sent more than one angel to meet with him?

Do you think God still sends His angels to meet with us? If so, please explain why.

As a result of his meeting, what does Jacob name the place? Why does he give it this name?

Sometimes angels come in human form. Can you give an example?

Sometimes they come as angels, like this encounter with Jacob. How do you think he recognized them as angels?

Why do you think God sometimes sends angels in human form and sometimes not?

4. Where is Esau now living?

Why do you think Jacob sent messengers ahead of him?

This is interesting. The word for "angels" in verse 1 and for "messengers" in verse 3 is the same word: malak. Do you think there might be a connection? Please explain.

What was Esau's frame of mind the last time the two brothers were together?

Look carefully at Jacob's instructions to his messengers. What specifically are they to tell Esau?

What title does Jacob use in referring to his brother? Why do you think he does this?

Why do you think Jacob wants to tell his brother that he has cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, menservants, and maidservants? Is he bragging? Please explain.

What is the main reason for his sending the messengers to Esau? (See verse 5.)

5. What do you think of Jacob's plan?

What changes can we detect have occurred in Jacob from his plan?

What advice would you give someone who wanted to heal an old family rift?

6. We do not know how long the messengers were gone. What do you think was Jacob's state of mind?

The messengers bring a very simple message to Jacob. What is it?

If you were Jacob, how would you interpret Esau's actions?

Jacob now has a family. How would this add to his concern?

7. What does verse 7 tell us?

What does being in "great fear" and "distress" mean to you?

What does Jacob decide to do?

Why does he do this?

Do you agree with his reasoning?

Again, if you were Jacob, whom would you put in the first group?

Do his actions show a lack of faith or a shrewd mind? Please explain.

8. Jacob has encountered the LORD at least twice, yet this is the first time we are told that Jacob prayed. Why do you think he prayed now?

What do you think lies behind people's first prayers to God?

How does Jacob address God?

Next, Jacob reminds God of God's promise to Jacob. Why does he do this?

The Bible tells us that God never forgets. How do you feel about Jacob's reminding God of what God said?

Have you ever done this? If so, please share why?

When Jacob does this, he shifts responsibility for his safety to God. Why does he do this?

9. Read verse 10. What is taking place in this verse?

Read James 4:6-10. How do these verses apply to Jacob?

What does it mean to you to humble yourself before God?

Is it easy for you to do this? Please explain.

Now read Deuteronomy 6:18. How is Jacob reflecting the truth in this statement?

10. What does Jacob ask in verse 11?

What does it mean to you that we are to be honest in our prayers?

Have you ever struggled in your prayers because you were searching for the "right" words so as not to offend God?

11. What does Jacob pray in verse 12?

In what way could this part of his prayer actually increase his faith?

Read 2 Cor. 1:20. How does this verse address Jacob's prayer?

12. Read Matthew 6:9-13. What parallels can you draw from Jacob's prayer and from Jesus' prayer?

What can we learn about praying to God from Jacob? Please be specific.

Why do you think some people are hesitant about praying out loud? Are you?

13. The next day after praying, what does Jacob decide to do?

What was the purpose of these gifts? (See v. 20.)

What gifts did Jacob send to his brother Esau?

Look carefully at these gifts. What would make them so valuable?

What message were his servants to deliver?

Jacob tells his servants "to be sure" to tell Esau what?

Remembering the prayer and what Jacob asked of God, are these gifts a sign of a lack of faith or a wise move? Please explain.

Imagine a storm is approaching Coalgate. A tornado is sighted. You pray for God's protection. Do you still go to the storm cellar? Please explain.

How do faith and prudent actions interact?

14. Why do we give gifts?

While in office, the President of the United States receives many gifts from leaders around the world. Why do you think they send or bring these gifts?

When President Bush recently visited the Pope, the President gave the Pope a walking stick carved with the Ten Commandments. Why do you think he did this?

Not long ago, our insurance commissioner had received thousands of dollars worth of gifts from companies he was supposed to regulate. He stated that these were gifts. What do you think? Please explain.

Were Jacob's gifts truly gifts? Please explain.

15. Jacob sends the gifts to Esau, but he stays behind. What does he do that night?

Can you locate the Jabbok?

When he discovered that the river could be crossed, what did he do with his family?

Why do you think Jacob stayed behind?

What does verse 23 tell us?

16. Now begins one of the more interesting events in the Bible. Verse 24 is very simple, yet, at the same time, very profound. What does verse 24 tell us?

Much has been written about this event. Twice before Jacob has had visions from God. Is this event a vision or did it physically happen to Jacob? Please explain.

What is the significance of the fight's lasting until daybreak?

Who was the man wrestling with Jacob?

In what other ways has Jacob wrestled with others for a "blessing"?

17. What is the significant about Jacob's not being able to defeat this man?

How does the man defeat Jacob?

Why do you think the man asked Jacob to let him go instead of just breaking away?

What was Jacob's answer?

What does his answer mean to you?

In response, Jacob is given a new name. What is it and what does it mean?

Whenever God changes someone's name, it marks a turning point in that person's life.
What has been that turning point in Jacob's life?
In what way is this struggle symbolic of Jacob's life?

Why does Jacob want to know the man's name?

Why does he not give his name?

18. What did this encounter have to do with Jacob's present situation?

What name does Jacob give this place and what does it mean?

Based upon the name, with whom does Jacob believe he was wrestling?

19. The next morning Jacob was walking with a limp. How do you think he explained that limp?

What is the significance of Jacob's walking with a limp thereafter?

Read Zechariah 4:6. What does this verse mean to you?

How has Jacob learned the truth of this verse?

Now read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Has God taught Jacob something similar? Please explain.

20. Was it the giving of gifts or the praying to God or both that protected Jacob and his family?

Genesis 33

1. Can you remember a time when you faced a difficult situation only to discover that what you had imagined was far worse than what actually happened? Would you please explain?

Why do you think we tend to imagine the worse?

Such has been the case with Jacob concerning his brother Esau. What do you think Jacob was feeling when he looked up and saw Esau approaching with 400 men? (Remember, Jacob just had a powerful encounter with God.)

Why do you think Esau brought with him 400 men?

2. As he sees his brother Esau approaching, what does Jacob do?

Why do you think he divided his family into three groups?

Why do you think he placed the maidservants with their children first? Rachel and Joseph last?

Let's say you are Dan or Asher and you find yourself in the first group. What are you thinking?

Before we judge Jacob too harshly, who takes the lead?

What does this tell you about Jacob?

3. Define humility.

How difficult is it for you to humble yourself before someone you love? Before someone you fear wants to harm you? Please explain.

What does Jacob do when he meets his brother Esau?

Why do you think he bowed down seven times?

One commentary states that this sevenfold bow involved bowing once from the waste until the top part of the body was parallel to the ground. The person would rise, take one step, and bow again. This would be repeated until the seventh bow would be directly in front of the other person. If this were the case, how would such an act affect you if you were Esau?

Do you think Jacob is sincere in his actions toward Esau? Please explain.

Which would be harder for you: bowing as Jacob did or receiving the bowing as Esau did? Please explain.

In what way does Esau "deserve" such treatment from his brother?

Please think carefully about this question. Do you think Jacob's bowing to Esau is his way of apologizing? Please explain.

4. How long has it been since the brothers have seen each other?

What does Esau do when he sees Jacob? How would you explain Esau's actions?

We are told that both men cried. Do you believe this "weakened" them in front of their men and family? Please explain.

Why do you think men are so hesitant to cry in public today?

These brothers have been separated over an event that happened 20 years previously. Do we still families split for years over a single event?

What can we learn about family quarrels from this encounter between Jacob and Esau?

5. Esau finally looks up and wants to know who the women and children are. What does Jacob answer?

Why do you think Jacob refers to himself as "your servant"? How does he refer to Esau? (See verse 8.)

Why have his wives and sons remained separated from the two brothers?

After Jacob answers Esau, who approaches first, second, and third? What do they all do?

6. After the emotions subside, what does Esau ask Jacob in verse 8?

What was Jacob's answer?

In verse 9, how does Esau refer to Jacob?

What is Esau's response to all the droves given to him?

What does it mean to you that Esau does not want all of this wealth?

What has happened to Esau during Jacob's absence?

Jacob pleads with Esau to accept his gifts. Why is this so important to Jacob?

Jacob wants to know that he has found "favor" with Esau. The word "favor" also means "grace" and "acceptance". Why do you think it is so important to Jacob to find grace or favor or acceptance from his brother?

Jacob then tells his brother that to see his face is like seeing the face of God. What do you think he means? What does Jacob see in his brother's face?

7. Jacob pleads with Esau to accept his gift. The word for gift is "berákâh" and means "prosperity" or "blessing". Jacob wants to share his blessings with Esau. Why?

How is this different from his actions when he ran away 20 years before?

What would it mean to you for someone to want to share his/her berakah with you?

Can you remember a time when you wanted to share God's prosperity or blessings with someone else?

8. Why does Esau accept Jacob's gifts?

How would you describe the relationship between the two brothers now?

After this initial meeting, what does Esau want to do?

Why do you think he wants to accompany Jacob?

9. We need to look carefully at Jacob's answer. What does he say in response to Esau's offer to accompany him?

Do you believe Jacob is being honest with his brother? Please explain.

Some commentaries state that Jacob was being very serious and honest with Esau. They could not travel as fast as Esau and his men. However, look back at *Genesis 32*. How long did it take Laban to overtake Jacob? What does this tell us?

What do you think is really behind Jacob's answer?

10. So, because Jacob must travel slowly, what alternative does Esau propose?

How does Jacob answer?

Do you think Jacob is afraid to have his brother's armed men accompanying him? Please explain.

11. Finally, Esau gives in and prepares to return home to await Jacob's arrival. Where is Esau going?

Can you locate Seir on a map?

What does Jacob tell his brother in verse 14?

However, instead of going to Seir, where does Jacob go? Where is this place located?

Can you think of a good reason why Jacob would tell his brother one thing and then do the opposite?

Did Jacob lie to his brother? Please explain.

How else might Jacob have handled this situation?

What do you think was going through Esau's mind as he waited for Jacob's arrival only to learn that he was going the other direction?

What does Jacob name his new home? What does it mean?

12. Look back at Jacob's first encounter with God after he fled from the anger of his brother. What did God promise him?

What does verse 18 tell us?

Who else camped at this site? (See Genesis 12:6.)

Why do you think that Jacob bought a plot of land?

How is this a partial fulfillment of God's promise contained in Genesis 12:7?

As with Abraham, Jacob now owns part of the promised land. What is the significance of this act?

After building an altar, what does Jacob name it? What does this name mean?

13. How has Jacob changed because of his 20 years away from home?

Genesis 34

1. Can you remember a time when you wanted to go somewhere but were told that it was not an appropriate place for you? What happened?

Are there places that we as Christians should not go? Please explain.

Who was Dinah?

What do you think it was like for her to be the only girl in a family of eleven brothers?

What does Dinah decide to do in verse 1?

Why do you think she wanted to see or visit the women of the land?

Do you see anything "wrong" or "inappropriate" for a 15-year-old girl to visit the women of the land? Please explain.

According to the customs during this time, Dinah was not to go out unaccompanied. Why do you think she was alone?

2. Verses 2 and 3 recount an incident that will have grave consequences. Read these two verses and restate in your words what happened?

Why did Shechem take Dinah and violate her?

Who was Shechem?

Do you think he thought he was doing anything wrong? Please explain.

Without casting blame, was Dinah in any way responsible for what happened? Was Shechem?

3. What future awaited Dinah as a young, unmarried girl who had been raped?

How would this affect the entire family?

What instructions did Abraham give Isaac and Isaac give Jacob concerning a spouse?

Would the same stipulations apply to Dinah? Please explain.

4. Verse 3 tells us that Shechem's heart was drawn to Dinah and that he loved her. Does this make a difference? Please explain.

What would you say to a young, unmarried couple who wanted to engage in extramarital sex because they love each other? More importantly, what does God's word say?

Because of his love, what does Shechem tell his father?

5. What does Jacob do when he learns his only daughter has been defiled?

Does his reaction surprise you? Please explain.

Can you think of a time when taking no immediate action would be a prudent course? Please explain.

This is a difficult situation. Imagine you are Jacob. You have just purchased a plot of land from Shechem's father. How might you have handled this situation?

6. Things begin to happen very quickly at this point. According to verse 6, what does Hamor do?

What do you think this conversation between these two fathers was like?

As Hamor is speaking with Jacob, Jacob's sons hear the news about their sister. What was their reaction?

Some versions of the Bible say the sons were filled with grief and fury. Others say they were very wroth. Describe these brothers as they hurriedly returned home.

7. Verse 7 is very interesting. It states that the brothers were angry because Shechem had done a disgraceful thing. The KJV reads Shechem "had wrought folly" through his deed. What does this mean to you?

As we read further, verse 7 states that Shechem had done a disgraceful thing in or against ISRAEL. Why do you think it does read "against Dinah"?

This is the first mention of the Abraham's descendants using the name "Israel". Why is this significant?

How does this make Shechem's act even more abominable?

8. Some commentaries suggest that Jacob's passivity concerning his daughter may have had something to do with her mother. Who was Dinah's mother?

Do you think Jacob's reaction would have been different if she had been Rachel's daughter? Please explain.

9. As Hamor is speaking with Jacob, the brothers return home. We are not told what transpired, but Hamor stops talking to Jacob and begins speaking to the brothers. Do you think he knew they were angry? Please explain.

Look carefully at Hamor's words in verse 8. Do they seem sincere? Please explain.

Is Hamor seeking a diplomatic solution to a very touchy situation? Is there anything wrong with such solutions? Please explain.

The diplomat Hamor continues to expound on the benefits of such a marriage. What are some of these benefits in verses 9 & 10?

Jacob has a large family with huge flocks, yet he only owns a small portion of land. How might such an offer appeal to him?

Do people today use marriage to form alliances or to increase a fortune? Please explain.

10. Once again, when we read verses 11 and 12, we get the sense that Hamor truly wants to find a peaceful solution to the problem. Does this surprise you considering what his son did? Please explain.

What do you think of parents who try to get their children out of trouble? Please explain.

Do you sense anything wrong with Hamor's proposal? If so, what?

11. Who replies to Hamor?

Why do you think Jacob remains silent?

According to verse 13, how did the brothers answer Hamor?

Where do you think the brothers learned to practice deceit?

When we look at the relationship between Jacob and his sons, what is one way that parents "teach" their children?

What implications does this have for us as parents?

Based upon this episode, what advice would you give new parents?

12. When we look at the brothers' answer, we can detect a partial truth. They begin by saying, "We can't do such a thing." According to their thoughts, why can't they?

According to God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, why can't they?

What the brothers are planning to do is very deceitful. However, they make it even worse by covering it up with religious reasons. What were those reasons?

Can you think of examples from our past when the church cloaked wrong actions with God's name?

Can you think of an example of how people today justify their actions through religious arguments?

Why do you think the brothers chose circumcision as the only requirement?

13. The brothers go beyond Hamor's original request. If Hamor and Shechem will agree to their conditions, what do the brothers say they are willing to do?

Why do they make this added concession?

14. Does Hamor or Shechem suspect any foul play? Explain.

Verse 18 says that Hamor and Shechem found the proposal pleasing. The word for "pleasing" is *yatab*. It means to be happy, to be joyful, to be glad, to be pleased. How would you describe Shechem at this point?

What does verse 19 tell us about Shechem?

Why did Shechem waste no time in carrying out the brothers' instructions?

15. Hamor and Shechem now have to convince all the other men to join them. Where do they go to speak to the others?

Why do they go to the gate of the city?

According to verse 21, what do Hamor and Shechem say about Jacob and his sons?

How does their statement make the brothers appear?

What reasons do Hamor and Shechem give the men as to why they should become like Jacob and his family?

Have we, as a nation, ever made concessions so that we might benefit from another country's wealth? Please explain.

16. What was the result of the meeting at the gate?

What does this tell us about Hamor and Shechem?

When we read verse 26, we learn why the brothers chose circumcision as the condition. Why?

Without getting too graphic, what was the situation like in Shechem?

17. Verse 25 contains a little surprise. Up to this point we have been reading about the brothers, which means all eleven. But who actually attacks the men of Shechem?

What do we know about Simeon and Levi?

What did the two brothers do?

Why do you think they killed every male?

This was not an impulsive act. The brothers planned it and waited over 4 days to carry out their plan. Does this fact make their actions worse? Please explain.

Since the other brothers did not take part in the killing, is it possible they did not know what Simeon and Levi were going to do? Please explain.

18. What does verse 26 tell us?

Why do you think Dinah was with Shechem?

What do you think is going to happen to Dinah?

19. Verse 25 makes it quite clear that Simeon and Levi killed all the men in the city. However, verse 27 mentions "the sons of Jacob" came upon all the dead bodies. Who do you think are the sons of Jacob mentioned in verse 27?

Were all the brothers in on this act? Please explain.

What did the sons of Jacob do?

Why do you think they took the women and children?

After reading verse 28, we learn that Jacob's sons destroyed this city. How would you describe these young men at this time?

20. We finally hear from Jacob. Where has been all of this time?

Do you think he could have stopped his sons? Please explain.

Jacob is afraid because of their actions. Why?

He says his sons have "troubled" him. The word for "troubled" is *akar*. It means to trouble, to stir up, to make someone taboo. So, according to Jacob, what was the result of their revenge?

Is Jacob's concern valid? Please explain.

Notice in verse 30, Jacob says he is concerned the people in the land will join forces against "me". Why does he not say against "us"?

What was the brothers' response to their father's concern?

21. During this entire chapter, God is not mentioned once. What does this mean to you?

Does God's not being mentioned mean He was not present? Please explain.

Do you hold Jacob responsible in any way for what happened? Why or why not?

22. Look at Genesis 26:23-25. Where did Isaac make his home?

Look at Genesis 28:10. Where did Jacob leave when fleeing from his brother?

Now look at Genesis 33:12. Esau says he will accompany Jacob. Where?

Genesis 33:16 tells us Esau returned to Seir. Look at a map. What town must Esau travel through to arrive at Seir?

How or why did Jacob end up in Shechem?

Here is the main question: is it possible that this entire episode with Dinah and Shechem might have been avoided if Jacob had been honest with Esau and gone with him to Beersheba? Please explain.

Genesis 35

1. When Jacob first left home to escape the wrath of his brother, where did God first meet with him?

What promise or vow did Jacob make at that time? (See Gen 28:20-22.)

Some commentaries state that when Jacob vowed to make Bethel God's house, Jacob was promising to return. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain.

Jacob has been in the Succoth/Shechem region for 10 years. How far is that from Bethel?

What does God instruct Jacob to do in verse 1?

Why do you think God said this to him?

Can you think of a time when God had to remind you of a promise you had made to Him?

What do you think might have caused Jacob to "forget" to return to Bethel?

2. Prior to leaving, what instructions does Jacob give his family?

Considering Jacob's relationship with the LORD, how do you explain this command?

Why do you think Jacob did not do anything about this earlier?

From where do you think these foreign gods came?

Do you think Jacob knew about the idols Rachel took from her father? Please explain.

3. Jacob also tells his family to purify themselves and change clothes. This is the first time we read of people purifying themselves. What do you think Jacob meant?

In what ways does God call us to purify ourselves today?

How can we purify our homes? Our city?

This purification takes place before they leave for Bethel, the next part of their journey. Can you think of a time when God called you or the church to purify themselves before they could move on?

4. What does Jacob plan to do when he arrives at Bethel? Why do you think he wants to do this?

Jacob's family gave Jacob all of their idols. What else did they give him? Can you learn why these items were included?

What did Jacob do with all the idols?

5. What does verse 5 tell us happened when they set out for Bethel?

Some commentaries suggest that the terror of God was a result of their destroying Shechem. Others suggest that it was a supernatural terror sent by God. What do you think? Please explain.

Why would these surrounding cities be tempted to pursue Jacob and his family?

6. When Jacob and his family arrived at Bethel, he built an altar. What did he name the place?

Why did Jacob give it this name?

What does it mean to you that God revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel?

In what ways does God reveal Himself to us today?

Can you remember when God revealed Himself to you? Would you share what it was like?

7. According to verse 8, who was Deborah?

How long has it been since Jacob has seen his mother, Rebekah?

How do you think Deborah came to be with Jacob and his family?

What does it tell us about Deborah that her death is recorded in the midst of this narrative?

8. God appears again to Jacob. What does God say to Jacob in verse 9?

Again, what does the name Jacob mean? What does Israel mean?

What name does God use to refer to Himself?

Why do you believe God used this name this time?

What else does God say to Jacob?

What does it mean when God tells Jacob that He will give the land to his descendents after him?

What has Jacob done to "deserve" this blessing from God? Please explain.

What does Jacob do after God speaks to him and then leaves?

What does Jacob do after building the stone pillar?

Why do you think he poured out an offering of a drink and of oil?

9. Jacob and his family once again set out. What direction do they travel?

What happens during this journey?

How does the midwife try to comfort Rachel?

With her last breath, what name does she give her son and what does it mean?

However, for the only time, Jacob changes the name of his son. What name does he give his youngest son and what does it mean?

Why do you think Jacob changed the name?

How does Jacob commemorate his wife's burial place?

Why do you think the bible tells us that the pillar marking her grave is still there?

10. Verse 22 is very interesting. It does not seem to fit with the rest of the story. Who was Reuben? Who was Bilhah?

What is the significance of Reuben's sleeping with Bilhah? In other words, what do you think Reuben was trying to do?

Look at 2 Samuel 12:11 and 2 Samuel 16:21-22. What might these verses have to do with this episode between Reuben and his father?

Where did Reuben "learn" this behavior?

Note, that the verse does not say Jacob heard about it but that Israel heard about it. Why is this significant?

Why do you think Israel did not say anything to his son?

11. Verses 23-26 tell us the names of Jacob's 12 sons, who will become the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, we finally read that Jacob returned home to his father at Mamre. About how long has Jacob been gone?

How old was Isaac when he died?

Who buries Isaac?

Do you think this is the first time the two brothers have seen each other since their meeting upon Jacob's return?

12. What spiritual lessons has Jacob learned since returning to the Promised Land?

What do you think is the most important lesson he has learned?

Genesis 36

Genesis 36 is a departure from the previous chapters. This chapter focuses on the genealogy of Esau. While it can be very interesting to look at these genealogies in detail, we are going to limit ourselves to a few questions.

1. What is the significance of recording a genealogy?

Why do you think God included Esau's genealogy?

2. What other name was given to Esau?

What does it mean?

What can you learn about the Edomites? (See Numbers 20:14-21; 2 Samuel 8:11-13; 1 Kings 11:14-22. Can you find other references?)

3. Verse 5 tells us that Esau's sons were born in Canaan (the Promised Land), but he took them to another land. Jacob's sons were born outside Canaan, but Jacob brought them back. What can we learn from this? (See Matthew 21:28-31.)
4. According to verses 6 and 7, why did Esau separate himself and his family from his brother Jacob?
5. What does verse 31 tell us?

Why do you think the Bible lists the kings of Edom?

Why do you think we are told that they were kings before any Israelite king reigned?

Genesis 37

1. Genesis 36 focused on Esau and his descendents. Genesis 37 focuses on Jacob and his family. Verse 2 says that we are going to read an account of Jacob, and this account begins with Joseph. Why?

How old was Joseph when this account begins?

What were you like at 17?

What was Joseph doing?

Why do you think this verse mentions that he was with his brothers and lists them as the sons of his father's wives, Zilpah and Bilhah?

Which wife is not mentioned? Who are her children?

How old would Benjamin be at this time?

2. What do you think was the bad report Joseph brought about his brothers?

What do you think was his reason for doing this?

Can you think of a time when you brought your parents a "bad" report about one of your siblings? What was your motive?

3. Now that you have stated your interpretation of Joseph's actions, let us look at what some of the commentaries say. **Title:** New Commentary on the Whole Bible: Old Testament Volume, Third Edition, 1990 states the following:

Joseph . . . was feeding the flock—lit. “Joseph being seventeen years old was a shepherd over the flock”—with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Oversight or superintendence is evidently implied. This post of chief shepherd might be assigned him either from his being the son of a principal wife or from his superior qualities of character; and if invested with this office, he acted not as a gossiping telltale, but as a “faithful steward” in reporting the scandalous conduct of his brothers.

What do you think of the statement “oversight or superintendence is evidently implied”?

Do you believe Joseph was acting out of his “superior qualities of character”? Please explain.

The word for “bad” is “rah” in the Hebrew. It means bad, evil, disagreeable, malignant, unpleasant, evil (giving pain, unhappiness, misery). What do you truly believe was behind Joseph’s actions? What are your reasons?

What can we learn about commentaries from this short explanation?

4. Regardless of Joseph’s motivation, what effect do you think this bad report had on his brothers?

What does verse 3 tell us?

What effect would this favoritism on Jacob’s part have on his family?

The brothers know Israel loves Joseph the most. Joseph brings their father a bad report. What do you think was the relationship between Joseph and his brothers? Please explain.

5. What does Israel give Joseph?

Tradition tells us that he gave Joseph a coat of many colors, but the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. What can you learn about this "coat" that Jacob gave Joseph?

What was the real significance of this gift?

When Joseph wore this coat, what message would it send to others, including his brothers?

Jacob should have known what parental favoritism would do to a family. Why?

How do you explain Jacob's actions?

Verse 4 tells us the result of Jacob's favoritism. What was it?

Some versions state that his brothers could not speak peaceably to him. Others say they could not say a kind word to him. Knowing how much their father loved Joseph, what do you think they said around him?

6. So far, we have focused on Jacob and the brothers. Can we hold Joseph at fault for the relationship with his brothers? Please explain.

Do you think Joseph was bothered by this situation? Please explain.

7. Do you believe God still speaks to us through dreams?

Has God ever "spoken" to you in a dream? Would you mind sharing what God said?

What other people received messages from God through dreams?

What was Joseph's first dream?

Why do you think he told his brothers?

Just because God gives you a message, does that mean you are to share it immediately? Please explain.

Why might God want us to wait before revealing a particular message?

Some dreams can be difficult to interpret. However, this one does not seem to be one because the brothers seem to know the meaning immediately. Based upon their reaction in verse 8, what did they believe the dream meant?

How do you think you would have reacted if you had been Reuben, Jacob's first-born son?

What was the result of Joseph's telling his brothers about his dream?

8. God gives Joseph another dream. What was this dream?

What is the meaning of this dream?

Why do you think God gave Joseph two dreams that were so similar?

This time Joseph not only tells his brothers about the dream but also his father. What was Jacob's reaction?

What does it mean to you that Jacob rebuked his son? Why did he do this?

After rebuking his son, what did Jacob do? Why do you think he did this?

9. Some time passes. Jacob sends his sons to tend his flocks. He keeps Joseph home. Why did he not send Joseph with them?

Where did they go to graze their father's sheep? Does it surprise you that they would go there? Please explain.

What do you think the brothers were thinking about as they wandered with the sheep?

Read James 1:20. What does this verse mean to you and how does it apply to this situation?

10. In verse 13 what does Israel ask Joseph to do?

What was Joseph's mission?

Israel or Jacob had to be aware of the animosity between Joseph and his brothers, yet he sent Joseph anyway. What conclusions can we draw from this?

Does Joseph seem to be worried about going? Please explain.

11. Where does Joseph go first to locate his brothers?

When Joseph could not find his brothers at Shechem, he wandered around the country. What does this mean to you?

Who tells him where to find his brothers? Where does he go next? About how far is Joseph from home?

Joseph dutifully fulfills his father's instructions; yet, he must have known how his brothers felt about him. What does this tell us about Joseph?

12. Verse 18 tells us that the brothers say Joseph while he was still a long way off. How did they recognize him?

What does this fact tell us about the land in this area?

How do the brothers refer to him in verse 19? What do you think they meant by this?

Now we begin to see the result of years of jealousy and sibling rivalry. The brothers devise a plan. What do they want to do with their brother?

According to verse 20 what is another reason they wanted to kill Joseph?

13. Which brother was the only one to try to rescue Joseph?

Of all the brothers who would stand to benefit most from Joseph's death? Please explain.

What does Reuben suggest they do to Joseph? What is his reason behind this suggestion?

What is a cistern?

What does this episode tell us about Reuben?

14. What do the brothers do when Joseph arrives?

Why do you think they tore off his coat?

What do you think Joseph was thinking as he lay at the bottom of the cistern?

If you were Joseph, would you have a difficult time seeing this as the fulfillment of the dream God had given to you? Please explain.

15. What do the brothers do after they throw Joseph into the cistern?

What does this tell us about them?

As the brothers are sitting there, who approaches?

Who were the Ishmaelites?

Whose idea was it to sell Joseph?

What is ironic about Joseph's being sold to the Ishmaelites?

16. What do you think Joseph was feeling as he waited at the bottom of that cistern?

What do you think would be the hardest part about being betrayed by your own family?

17. Which brother wanted to sell Joseph and at least gain a little from their plan?

What do you know about this brother?

Why did he want to sell Joseph?

Can you think of someone else who wanted to keep his hands clean so he would appear innocent?

What does it tell you about the brothers that they were more interested in being legally innocent than in honoring their father?

For how much did they sell Joseph?

18. Where was Reuben during this transaction?

What did he do when he learned that Joseph was no longer in the cistern?

What can you learn about the significance of tearing one's clothes? What does this tell us about Reuben?

Once again, we see the pattern of deception. Reuben does not want to tell his father the truth. To avoid this, what plan does Reuben devise?

What exactly do they say to Jacob when they return home? In what way did they deceive him?

What conclusion does Jacob reach concerning Joseph?

19. When he believes his son is dead, what does Jacob do?

After their father mourns for several days, what do all Jacob's sons and daughters do?

What does it mean to you that Jacob refused to be comforted?

What does Jacob tell his family?

What do you think the brothers were feeling as they watched their father in misery over the loss of Joseph?

20. What eventually happens to Joseph?

At this point in Joseph's life, God would seem to be absent: Joseph sold into slavery; his brothers fake his death; they lie to their father. How would you explain God's presence so far?

Does God's silence mean His approval or His absence? Please explain.

Can you think of a time when God seemed "silent" in your life but was still very present?

Genesis 38

1. The narrative takes another turn as it leaves Joseph, who is on his way to Egypt, and returns to Jacob and his family. How many brothers are left at home?

Of those remaining, why do you think the narrative now turns to Judah?

What do you know about Judah, especially from the last chapter?

What instructions did God give to Abraham and Jacob concerning the people of the Promised Land?

Why did God want Abraham and his seed to be separated from these peoples?

How faithful have they been to God's instructions? Please explain.

Does God still expect us to be "separated" from the "peoples of the land"? Please explain.

Read 2Corinthians 6:14. What does this verse mean to you? Why do you think God gave us this command?

What might happen if one were unequally yoked?

2. Joseph knows first-hand how marrying out of the faith affects the family. What happened to his grandfather Abraham? His brother Esau?
3. What does verse 1 tell us about Judah?

Why do you think he left home?

Where is Adullam?

4. What happens to Judah while he is living in Adullam?

Why do you think we are not given his wife's name?

How many children does Judah have by his wife?

5. Verse 6 lets us know that a number of years have passed. How?

What has been happening to Joseph during these years?

When Abraham wanted a wife for his son Isaac, what did he do?

When Judah wanted a wife for his son Er, what did he do?

What can you find out about Tamar?

6. We are not told much about Judah's children, but we are given some interesting clues. What does verse 7 tell us about Er?

What does it mean to you that someone is evil in the sight of the LORD?

What did God do to Er?

7. Following the death of Er, what instructions does Judah give his son Onan?

What do you think Judah meant by fulfilling the duty of a brother-in-law? (See Deu. 25:5.)

What do you think was the purpose of this commandment from God?

Look closely at Deu. 25:5 once again. What was the brother-in-law supposed to do before he slept with the widow?

What did Onan do that was so wrong?

Why were his actions so detestable to God? What motivated Onan?

What happens to Onan?

8. Based upon the actions of his sons and the punishments they received, can we conclude anything about Judah? Please explain.

9. Judah had a third son. What was his name?

According to the duty of a brother-in-law, what should Judah have done?

Instead, what does he tell Tamar?

Where does Tamar go to wait?

Tamar is Judah's daughter-in-law. Why do you think he did not allow her to stay with him?

What do you think Tamar was thinking as she waited alone at her father's house?

10. Verse 12 tells us that a long time had passed. Why do you think Tamar did not take another husband?

What happened during this time?

After grieving, where did Judah go and why?

What can you learn about sheep shearing time?

Verse 14 tells us that even after all this time, Tamar was still wearing cloths of mourning. What does this tell us about her?

11. What did Tamar do when she learned that Judah was going to Timnah?

Why did she do this?

What do you think of her plan?

How did Tamar know this plan would work?

12. What did Judah do when he saw Tamar?

Who do you think Judah thought she was?

What does this tell us about Judah that he would sleep with a temple prostitute?

What does Judah promise Tamar as payment?

This is interesting. Why does she ask for something as a pledge?

What items does Tamar want as a pledge? Why do you think she wanted these two items?

13. Once again, we see the pattern of deception repeat itself in Jacob's family. What does Tamar do after Judah sleeps with her?

What penalty did Tamar face for becoming pregnant?

What do you think was going through Judah's mind when he learned the prostitute was nowhere to be found?

Why do you think Judah sent his friend and not one of his family members to deliver his payment?

Why does Judah not try to find the prostitute?

Why might he face ridicule?

14. According to verse 24, what did Judah plan to do when he discovered his daughter-in-law was pregnant?

What does this tell us about Judah?

By what authority could Judah call for Tamar's death?

By Judah's very sentencing of Tamar, he is admitting that she is still part of the family. What does this mean for Judah?

Read Matthew 7:3-5. In what way does this verse apply to Judah?

Why is it easier for us to see "sin" in other people and not in ourselves?

15. Notice in verse 25 that Tamar still considers Judah her father-in-law. What does this tell us about Tamar?

What simple message did Tamar send to her father-in-law?

What do you think Judah was thinking when he saw his belongings and realized that the "prostitute" was really his daughter-in-law?

What did Judah reply when he realized what he had done?

What does this comment reveal about his character?

What does it mean to you that Tamar was more righteous than Judah? Does this mean that Tamar's actions were righteous? Please explain.

What do you think is meant by the last part of verse 26?

16. Once again, we have twins. To show us how important the right of the firstborn is, what do they do to determine which child is born first?

What happens after the scarlet cord is attached?

Which child was actually born first? What does his name mean?

What did they name the second son and what does his name mean?

What can you learn about these two children?

17. Why do you think this account of Judah interrupted the narrative of Joseph?

Can you see any connections between this episode and the episode with Joseph?

Genesis 39

1. The narrative now returns to Joseph. Where were Joseph and his brothers when the brothers sold him into slavery?

How long was the journey to Egypt?

What do you think the journey was like for Joseph?

Why does God take us on "journeys" from time to time?

2. Who was Potiphar?

What can you learn about him?

What adjustments do you think Joseph would have to make as a servant in Potiphar's home?

3. What does verse 2 tell us?

How can the LORD be with Joseph when Joseph is being held as a slave?

What was the result of God's being with Joseph?

How could a slave prosper?

What is the significance of Joseph's living in his master's house?

How easy is it for you to serve someone who does not accept Christ?

4. What does it mean to you for God to prosper someone? Please be specific.

Some people preach what is referred to as a "Prosperity Gospel". What can you learn about this teaching?

What is your opinion concerning this belief?

5. Verse 3 tells us that Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph. What does this mean to you?

Can you see that the LORD is with some people? Please explain.

How could a slave be given success in everything that he did?

Because of deceit and jealousy, Joseph has found himself in a foreign land where God's name is not known, yet God is with Joseph. What does this tell you about God?

Can you feel God's presence at your job?

6. What does it mean to you that Joseph found favor with Potiphar?

What was the result of this favor with Potiphar?

What do you think some of Joseph's duties were?

How would serving in Potiphar's household help prepare Joseph for his later role with Pharaoh?

Read Matthew 24:45-51. How do these verses relate to Joseph's situation in Potiphar's house?

What do these verses have to teach us?

7. What does verse 5 tell us?

How would you feel if you were Joseph and you saw God blessing the man who was holding you as a slave?

How would you react if God were using you at this time to bless an unbelieving coworker or boss?

Do you think there are unbelieving people in Coalgate who are being blessed because God's people have prayed for His blessings? How does this make you feel?

Why might God do this?

Read Proverbs 3:5-6. What do these verses mean to you?

8. According to verse 6, what did Potiphar do concerning Joseph?

What does it mean to you that Potiphar did not concern himself with anything except for the food he ate?

Should Christians be this faithful? Are we? Please explain.

How do you think Joseph has changed the most since the day he received the coat of many colors?

9. What else does verse 6 tell us about Joseph?

Why do you think God included this information?

What did Potiphar's wife ask Joseph to do?

What does the Bible tell us about temptation?

Read I Corinthians 10:13. What does this verse mean to you?

What was Joseph's means of escape from this temptation?

10. Joseph refuses. What does he tell Potiphar's wife?

Looking at Joseph's statement, what seems to be his most important concern?

The key statement can be found at the end of verse 9. What does Joseph say and what does it mean?

Why should we, when tempted to say or do something wrong, see our actions as a sin against God?

Because of the wife's persistence, what action does Joseph take?

How would you compare Joseph's actions with Judah's actions?

What effect do you think this had on Potiphar's wife?

11. Verse 11 tells us that Joseph was left alone in the house. What does this tell us about Potiphar's opinion of Joseph?

When Potiphar's wife discovers Joseph alone, what does she do?

Why does Joseph run?

What does Potiphar's wife decide to do after Joseph ran from her?

What do you think is her motivation?

Why do you think she told the household servants before telling her husband?

12. According to verse 15, what "evidence" did Potiphar's wife have?

This is the second time Joseph's "coat" or "robe" was used against him. Both times he was innocent. How would this make you feel?

What story does she tell Potiphar?

What reasons does Potiphar have to believe his wife? To believe Joseph?

13. What actions does Potiphar take against Joseph?

For the second time Joseph is wrongly thrown into captivity. Joseph remained faithful to God and to his master; yet, he finds himself in prison. What might be going through Joseph's mind?

How difficult might it be to see God's hand in this?

14. Amazingly, what does verse 21 tell us about Joseph's stay in prison?

What does it mean to you that God showed Joseph kindness and gave him favor?

At this point, there is only one constant in Joseph's life. What is that constant?

How difficult might it be for you to see God's favor when circumstances are not going your way?

What can this episode teach us about faith vs. circumstances?

15. Because of God's favor, what happened to Joseph while he was in prison?

We read that the warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care. What does this mean to you?

How could Joseph be given success while in prison? What does this mean to you?

16. How have these events helped to prepare Joseph for what God has prepared for him?

What do you think about God's teaching methods? Please explain.

What can we learn about God from this chapter?

What are the most important lessons God is teaching Joseph at this point in his life? Be specific.

Genesis 40

1. Verse 1 lets us know that some time passed before the story begins again. What do you think life was like for Joseph?

Who eventually joins Joseph in the prison?

These two prisoners are not known by name but by position. What can you learn about them from the positions they held?

Why would the chief cupbearer and chief baker be such powerful positions?

What does it mean to you to offend someone or to be offended?

What does it tell us about Pharaoh that he put these two men in prison for offending him?

What is a political prisoner?

Why do you think the captain of the guard put these two under Joseph's supervision?

Notice, verse 4 says that Joseph was to attend or to serve these two prisoners. What can we learn from this?

2. Again, considerable time has passed when both the cupbearer and the baker have dreams. Why do you think they had dreams the same night?

What does Joseph notice about them the next morning?

What can we deduce about Joseph's relationship with these men?

When Joseph asks them what is troubling them, what is their answer?

Why would they be troubled that there was no one to interpret their dreams?

3. What is the difference between arrogance and boldness?

When Joseph learns about the dreams, how does he respond?

What can we learn about Joseph from his response?

How did Joseph learn this truth about God and dreams?

What was the cupbearer's dream?

What was the baker's dream?

What can we learn about the way God communicates to us through dreams? (Notice the details of each.)

Why do you think God would speak to these two men through dreams?

4. As Joseph listened to these dreams, do you think he thought of his dreams? Please explain.

What was the interpretation of the cupbearer's dream?

After giving the interpretation, what does Joseph ask of the cupbearer?

Notice Joseph's words, especially those in verse 15. What do they reveal about this young man?

What do you think the baker was thinking as he listened to the interpretation of the cupbearer's dream?

What was the interpretation of the baker's dream?

5. Joseph knows that the cupbearer is going to be released in three days. What do you think he was feeling during this time?

What happened on the third day?

What happened to the cupbearer? To the baker?

Verse 23 is very simple but very important. What does it tell us?

What do you think was going on in Joseph's mind as he waits and waits?

For you, what is the hardest part of waiting?

Genesis 41

1. Verse 1 tells us that two full years had passed since Joseph interpreted the dream for the cupbearer. What do you think was going through Joseph's mind during this time?

How do you think Joseph kept from being discouraged?

Read I Samuel 30:6. Some versions say that David found strength in the LORD. Others say that he encouraged himself in the LORD. What do you think this means?

How would one encourage himself in the LORD?

2. After two years, Pharaoh had two dreams. What was the first dream?

What was his second dream?

Why do you think we are told in verse 7 that "Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream"? What does this tell us about the dreams?

Why do you think these dreams troubled Pharaoh?

According to verse 8, what did Pharaoh do?

How do you think he felt when none of his wise men or magicians could interpret the dream?

What do you think would be the most difficult part of interpreting a dream?

3. After hearing of the dreams and the inability of the wise men to interpret them, what does the chief cupbearer say to Pharaoh?

What do you think he meant by remembering his "faults" or "shortcomings" or "sins"?

Some commentaries state that it would be impossible for him to forget what had happened to him in the prison; therefore, he simply had not wanted to tell Pharaoh. What do you think? Would it be possible to forget such an event?

What does the cupbearer tell Pharaoh? Was his account accurate?

What does Pharaoh do when he hears the cupbearer's story?

4. Try to imagine Joseph's emotions at this time. He was sold into slavery by his brothers. He was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and sent to prison. He was forgotten in prison for two additional years. Then, suddenly, he receives word that Pharaoh wants to see him. What do you think he was feeling?

Several times the Bible will use the word "suddenly" when referring to God's timing. How would you explain God's "suddenly"?

What changes did Joseph go through before appearing before Pharaoh?

5. How comfortable would you be appearing before our President? A Saudi King? A Hamas leader?

What does Pharaoh say to Joseph?

How does Joseph respond?

What can we learn about Joseph from his response?

Read Proverbs 27:21. What does this verse mean to you?

6. Pharaoh then proceeds to tell Joseph his dreams. What additional information does he add to the dream?

What is the significance of Pharaoh's stating that he had never seen anything as ugly as the cows or the grain?

Next, Joseph explains the meaning of the dreams. What does he tell Pharaoh?

This was a major event, yet Joseph's explanation is short and to the point. What can we learn from this?

What was Joseph's explanation as to why God gave Pharaoh two dreams?

7. Joseph was only asked to explain the dreams. However, once he does that, he immediately begins advising Pharaoh. How do you explain this bold move?

Read Matthew 10:17-20. What does this verse mean to you, especially in light of Joseph's situation?

According to verse 33, what does Joseph tell Pharaoh, Pharaoh should do?

Do you think Joseph was promoting himself as the wise man? Please explain.

What responsibility was to be given to this wise man?

Briefly, summarize the rest of Joseph's advice?

8. What was Pharaoh's reaction to Joseph's advice?

What was Pharaoh's reaction to Joseph himself?

Read verse 39. What was Pharaoh's main reason for promoting Joseph?

What does Pharaoh decide to do with Joseph?

Look carefully at Pharaoh's words concerning Joseph. What would Joseph had been able to do?

Look back on all that has happened to Joseph. How had each incident helped prepare Joseph for this moment?

Has God ever used a difficult situation to prepare for a future blessing in your life? If so, would you share a little of what you learned?

How do you think you might handle being placed in such a position of authority?

What would be your greatest concern?

In verse 33, Joseph suggested Pharaoh place a man over the land of Egypt. What does Pharaoh decide to do in verse 40?

Why do you think Pharaoh gave so much authority to Joseph?

Read Matthew 25:21. What does this verse mean to you and how does it apply to Joseph?

9. Only in respect to the throne was Pharaoh greater than Joseph. What would be the danger of being given so much power?

What was the significance of Pharaoh's giving Joseph his signet ring?

What else did Pharaoh do for Joseph?

Again, what does Pharaoh say in verse 44?

10. What name does Pharaoh give Joseph?

What does this name mean?

Why do you think Pharaoh gave him a new name?

Who was Joseph's wife?

What can you learn about the priests of On?

11. Verse 26 tells us that Joseph was 30 years old when promoted by Pharaoh. How old was he when was sold into slavery by his brother?

What has happened to Joseph during this time?

What has happened to Joseph to "qualify" him for such a lofty position?

Read I Corinthians 1:26-31. What do these verses mean to you?

How likely would we be to accept someone like Joseph as a church leader? Please explain.

In what ways have you seen the truth of these scriptures?

What is the significance of verse 46 telling us that Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence?

12. According to verses 47-49, what does Joseph do?

What does this tell us about the land of Egypt?

How easy do you think this would be in our nation? Please explain.

Next, we are told that Joseph had two sons. What was the name of his first son? What does this name mean? Why does he give his son this name?

What was the name of his second son and what does it mean? Why did Joseph choose this name?

13. Following the seven years of plenty, the famine begins just as God had told Joseph. What else do we learn about the famine in verse 54?

When the people of Egypt grew hungry, they went to Pharaoh. What did he tell them to do?

What did Joseph do?

What does verse 57 tell us?

What can we learn about Joseph from this verse?

14. What can we learn about God from this chapter?

What can we learn about God's provision?

During this time, do you think Joseph ever considered exacting revenge? Please explain.

Genesis 42

1. How would you define "coincidence"?

How would you explain a coincidence in relation to God's sovereignty?

How has God used "coincidences" to speak to you or to help direct your path?

2. While Joseph has been serving as Pharaoh's second in command, what has been happening with Joseph's family in Canaan?

What does Jacob say to his sons?

How many sons did Jacob send to Egypt to buy food?

Which one did he not send and why did he do this?

Again, if you were one of the sons sent on this long journey, how would you feel?

Do you think the brothers have changed because of what they did to Joseph years before? Do you think they are as jealous of Benjamin as they were of Joseph? Please explain.

How do you think Benjamin felt being the only one not to go?

3. What can we learn from verse 5?

What do we learn about Joseph from verse 6?

How is it possible for Joseph to sell grain to all the people in the land?

What did they do when Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt looking for food?

Why do you think they were brought before Joseph personally?

4. Verse 7 tells us that as soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them. Why could he recognize them when they could not recognize Joseph?

What do you think Joseph was feeling at this precise moment?

We are told that Joseph spoke harshly to his brothers. What does this mean to you?

Why do you think Joseph did this?

5. What does Joseph ask them?

What do you think the brothers were feeling as they answered him?

Do you feel any compassion for the brothers?

6. What was the first dream God had given to Joseph?

What happens when the brothers find themselves in Joseph's presence?

Verse 9 tells us that Joseph remembered his dreams. How do you think Joseph felt as he looked upon his brothers bowing before him? Please explain,

7. What does Joseph say to them next?

If Joseph truly thought they were spies, what does he have the power to do?

What do you think this accusation did to the brothers?

What is the brothers' response?

How do they refer to Joseph and to themselves?

What is the last thing they say to Joseph?

What is ironic about this statement?

8. Despite their assurances, Joseph continues to accuse them of being spies. According to verse 13, what does Joseph learn about his family from their answer?

How do you think Joseph felt when he heard them say that one of their brothers was no more?

Joseph is living the first dream. What was the second dream he had and what does it mean?

9. Again Joseph accuses them of being spies, and he does so in the same harsh, accusatory tone. Why do you think he continues doing this?

In what way does this fit with his position?

What does Joseph say he is going to do to them? (See verse 15.)

Joseph says he is going to test them to see if they are spies. Why is he really testing them?

Joseph says "As surely as Pharaoh lives" to make his point. Why does he say this?

What condition does Joseph place on their leaving Egypt?

What had Jacob told them concerning Benjamin before they left?

The brothers are in a very difficult situation. How do their reactions differ from their reactions when they sold Joseph into slavery?

10. What does Joseph tell them in verse 16?

They are going to remain in prison until Jacob sends Benjamin, yet they know he will not do this. In what way are the brothers being tested?

Here is a key. Joseph says he is going to test their words to see if they are telling the truth. Why does he say this to them?

What do you think his brothers were thinking as they heard Joseph's words?

11. Joseph puts them into prison for how many days?

What do you think the brothers were saying to each other?

What do you think might have been their biggest concern?

12. After the three days, what does Joseph say to them?

What do you think Joseph meant when he said that he feared God?

What do you think the brothers, who thought him to be an Egyptian, thought he meant?

What did Joseph tell them he was going to do in verse 16?

What does he tell them they are to do now?

What do you think the brothers are feeling when they are told they must bring their youngest brother back with them?

13. Look carefully at verse 23. What do we learn about this exchange between Joseph and his brothers?

Believing they cannot be understood, what do the brothers believe is the main reason for their troubles?

After all these years, they still have not forgotten what they did. What does this mean to you?

14. Who was Reuben?

What does he say to his brothers?

Read *Genesis 4:10* and *Genesis 9:6*. How do these verses help explain Reuben's statement?

What do these verses mean to you and what implication do they hold for us today?

15. As the brothers were talking, what did Joseph do? (See verse 24.) What does this tell us about him?

Which brother does Joseph decide to keep with him? Why do you think he chose this brother and not Reuben?

Based upon what we read about Joseph in verse 24, how hard do you think it was for Joseph to bind Simeon in front of his other brothers?

Why do you think Joseph is doing this? Do you think he is acting on his own or following the LORD's guidance?

16. What does Joseph do with the grain his brothers' bought?

What else did he have put in the bags? Why do you think he did this?

When did the brothers notice their money was in their sacks?

Verse 28 tells us that their hearts sank at the sight of the silver. Why?

Whom do they believe is responsible for this occurrence? Was He? Please explain.

17. Upon their return home, what do they tell their father in verses 29-34?

Do they tell Jacob the truth? What does this tell us about them?

After this initial talk, they empty their sacks. What do they find?

Why were they all frightened?

What does Jacob say to his sons?

18. As the oldest, what does Reuben say to his father?

Do you think he is serious? Please explain.

Compare Reuben's statement, "Entrust him (Benjamin) to my care" with his statement when his brothers wanted to kill Joseph?

How has Reuben changed during this time?

19. How does Jacob respond?

In his concern, which sons does Jacob mention?

Does this mean he does not care about Simeon who is in an Egyptian prison?

Again, how do you think the brothers felt when Jacob said that Benjamin was the only son he had left?

20. During Joseph's absence, what changes have taken place in his brothers?

Has Jacob changed? If so, how?

1. How would you define "coincidence"?

Genesis 44

1. What do you think Joseph has learned about his brothers so far?

We read in verse 1 that Joseph is not through testing them. For what else do you think he is looking?

What do you think the brothers were thinking and feeling after being treated to a feast by this high-ranking official?

2. What instructions does Joseph give to his steward in verse 1?

What is a steward?

What qualities would you look for in a steward?

Read Luke 12:42. What does this say about stewards? (Note, some versions read manager and others steward.)

What does it mean to you that we are God's stewards?

3. Why do you think Joseph tells his steward to put his brothers' money back in their sacks?

Then Joseph has special instructions concerning Benjamin. What are they?

Do you have a favorite cup or possession? If you do, could you easily identify it?

Why do you think Joseph singled out Benjamin?

4. The brothers leave early the next morning. All the brothers are together. They have food. How would you describe their mood upon leaving?

Why do you think Joseph worked so hard to create this festive mood among his brothers?

Shortly after the brothers leave, what instructions does Joseph give to his steward?

What else does Joseph say about his cup in verse 5?

What can you learn about using a cup for divination?

What does God say about divination?

Do you think Joseph really practiced divination? Please explain.

Why do you think Joseph added this?

5. What do you think was the brothers' reaction when they saw Joseph's steward approaching?

What do the brothers say when the steward accuses them of repaying good with evil?

How might you react if you were unjustly accused?

Joseph has planned this very well. What do the brothers say in response in verse 7?

What evidence do they give to prove their innocence in verse 8?

Now comes the climax. Knowing they are innocent, what statement do they make to the steward in verse 9?

Are the brothers serious? Please explain.

However, what does the steward say he is willing to do if he finds the cup?

6. What do the brothers do to aid the steward in his search (verse 11)?

Why do you think the brothers did this?

Whose sack does the steward search first? Why?

How does the steward know who is the oldest?

7. The steward knows he will find the cup in Benjamin's sack. What can we learn about him in that he plays his part so well?

What did the brothers do when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack?

What is the significance of tearing their clothes?

It appears that Israel is going to lose another son. What did Israel do when the brothers gave him Joseph's bloody coat of many colors?

What does it say about the brothers that they are now the ones who are mourning?

8. What do the brothers do when they are brought before Joseph?

According to Joseph, how did he know they had "stolen" his cup?

What would you say if you were innocent but all the evidence pointed to your guilt?

Have you ever jumped to conclusions only to learn that you were wrong? Please share if you will.

Read 1 Timothy 5:19. How will following this verse keep us from making mistakes about others?

Do you think the church abides by this verse? Please explain.

9. What does it mean to you to intercede for someone?

In what way does Judah intercede for Benjamin?

What do you think Benjamin is feeling as he stands guilty before Joseph?

According to Judah, who uncovered their guilt?

Why do you think Judah does not try to defend himself and his brothers?

What does Judah think is going to happen to them?

10. Do you think Judah believes Benjamin is guilty? Please explain,

What does it tell us about Judah and the others that they never blame Benjamin or try to separate themselves from him?

11. What does Joseph say to Judah in verse 17?

Again, we do not hear from Benjamin at all. Why?

Why does Joseph tell the other brothers that they can go home in peace?

12. Now comes the moment of truth. Judah is faced with a decision. What does he ask permission to do?

Briefly summarized what Judah says to Joseph in verses 18-29?

Does Judah tell the truth? Please explain.

Beginning in verse 30, Judah gets to the heart of the situation. What does he say will happen if they do not return with "the boy"?

What does Judah tell Joseph in verse 32?

13. Therefore, what does Judah ask of Joseph?

Does Judah ever believe he will be set free? Please explain.

Why is Judah willing to exchange places with Benjamin?

How do his concerns for his father contrast with his concerns for his father following Joseph's disappearance?

How do you think Joseph is feeling as he listens to his brother express his concern about his father?

14. What does it mean to you for someone to repent?

Do you believe the brothers have truly repented of their actions against Joseph? Please explain.

Read Luke 3:7-9. What does John tell us?

What do you believe is fruit in keeping with repentance?

Have the brothers produced fruit in keeping with repentance? Please explain.

If you were Joseph, would you be convinced of your brothers' sincerity? Please explain.

Genesis 45

1. How do you feel about people showing emotions in church? Please explain.

Can you think of a time when you could not contain your emotions? What did you do?

After countless months, Joseph finds himself in such a situation. We read that he could no longer control himself before all his attendants. What does this mean to you?

Is this a sign of weakness on Joseph's part? Please explain.

In our society, how do we view the outward display of emotion by men? Why do you think this is so?

Men, how easy is it for you to show emotion before all your "attendants"?

2. What does Joseph have everyone do?

Why do you think Joseph did this?

Lest there be any doubt that Joseph loved his brothers, what does verse 2 tell us?

Why do you think the Egyptians told Pharaoh about Joseph's crying?

3. What does Joseph say to his brothers?

How did the brothers react when they learned this was their brother?

Why do you think they were terrified?

Why do you think Joseph told his brothers to come close to him?

4. How long has the famine lasted?

How many more years will it last?

What does Joseph tell his brothers in verse 5?

How easy would it be for you to forgive a family member who had betrayed you? Please explain.

According to verse 5, who does Joseph say is responsible for his being sold into slavery?

If you were one of the brothers, what would you be thinking at this time?

5. Verse 7 is a key verse. What does Joseph say was God's reason for all that had happened to him?

How easy or hard is it to see God's hand when we are in the middle of a difficult situation?

After a difficult situation, can you remember looking back and seeing God's hand and purpose? Please explain.

Why do you believe God often keeps the purpose hidden until the end?

6. Read verse 8. How would you describe Joseph's attitude toward God? Toward his brothers?

How do you account for his attitude?

Joseph is very clear. God sent him to Egypt, not the brothers. What else does Joseph say God did?

7. What does Joseph want his brothers to do?

Why does Joseph not want his father to delay in coming to Egypt?

What provisions will Joseph make for his family (see vv. 10-11)?

What does Joseph say will happen to his family if they do not come?

How can Joseph be so positive that these arrangements will be approved by Pharaoh?

Why do you think Joseph never considered going home to his father?

Read Genesis 31:3. What does the LORD tell Jacob to do?

How difficult would it be for you to leave the place God had commanded you to inherit?

8. What does Joseph say to his brothers in verse 12?

How could the brothers see for themselves that this man, who they thought was an Egyptian, was really their brother?

What does Joseph do in verse 14?

Why do you think he embraced Benjamin first?

What does it mean to you that he also embraced and kissed all of his brothers?

About what do you think the brothers spoke?

9. Beginning Abraham, deceit and/or deception has been a part of this family. Can you give an example from Abraham's life?

From Isaac's life?

From Jacob's life?

From his sons lives?

Now, after all these years, deception seems to have been replaced by honesty and trust. How would you explain this change?

What part has forgiveness played in the healing of this family?

10. How do you think the news reached Pharaoh's house?

How did Pharaoh react to the news of the arrival of Joseph's brothers?

What does it tell us about the relationship between Joseph and Pharaoh that Pharaoh not only cared about Joseph's family reunion but also was also pleased?

Read Ephesians 6:5-8. What do these verses mean to you?

How do they apply to Joseph and his situation?

If we applied these verses to the workplace, as employees, would we fit this description? Please explain.

11. What does it mean to you to have favor?

Pharaoh, touched by Joseph's situation, decides to take matters into his own hands. What does he tell Joseph to tell the brothers? (See vv 17-20.)

What is Pharaoh willing to give them?

Why do you think Pharaoh did not tell the brothers himself?

Why would Pharaoh be so gracious to these Hebrews whom he has never seen?

What does verse 20 mean to you?

12. Following Pharaoh's instructions, what does Joseph give each brother?

What does he give Benjamin?

Does Benjamin's special treatment seem to bother the other brothers? Please explain.

Does Joseph love Benjamin more than his other brothers? Please explain.

What does Joseph send to his father, Israel?

13. Verse 24 is very interesting. Joseph sends his brothers away. What advice does he give them?

Why would Joseph say this to his brothers? Why might they quarrel? (What happened the time they sold Joseph into slavery?)

Have you ever given this advice to your children: Don't quarrel with your brothers or sisters? Why is this advice so important?

How easy is it to slip back into old patterns of behavior?

14. Now comes the fateful moment. The brothers return home. What was Jacob's reaction when they told him Joseph was alive and the ruler of all Egypt?

What does it mean to you that Jacob was stunned?

Why would he have trouble believing them?

Read Acts 12:15. How does this pertain to Jacob's situation? Does their hesitation to believe show a lack of faith? Please explain.

How do the brothers convince Jacob that Joseph is really alive?

15. Finally, after all these years, Jacob's family is going to be reunited. What is the major difference in this family?

Genesis 46

1. The family is back together again. Joseph awaits the return of his father while Israel waits for the moment when he sees Joseph with his own eyes. What do you think was Israel's strongest emotion?

After Israel sets out for Egypt, where does he stop?

What is the significance of Beersheba?

2. How does God speak to Jacob?

How does God address him? Why do you think God did not use the name Israel?

What does God tell Jacob in this vision?

If you were Jacob, what would bring you the most comfort? Why?

Read Genesis 15:12-16. What does God say to Abraham?

What does God tell Jacob about going to Egypt?

Why do you think God did not tell Jacob what He told Abraham?

3. Who is on this caravan going to Egypt?

What do they take with them?

Based upon what we have read about Benjamin in these last chapters, how would you describe him?

4. Chapters 9-24 tell us about Jacob's sons and their families. How many children did Reuben have?

Simeon?

Levi?

Judah?

Issachar?

Zebulun?

Gad?

Asher?

Dan?

Naphtali?

Joseph?

Benjamin?

Does it surprise you that Benjamin had the largest family of all the brothers? Please explain.

How many in all left Canaan for Egypt? How many were in Israel's family?

5. According to verse 28 whom did Jacob send ahead of them?

Why do you think he did not send Reuben, his first born?

What were Judah's instructions?

What did Joseph do when his family arrived in Goshen?

What did Joseph do when he saw his father?

What does Israel say to Joseph after all this time?

6. After greeting his family, where does Joseph plan on going?

What does he plan to tell Pharaoh?

Specifically, according to verse 32, what is Joseph going to tell Pharaoh?

Why is he going to say this to Pharaoh?

How are they to respond when Pharaoh asks them about their occupation?

Do they tend livestock?

Why do you think the Egyptians thought all shepherds were detestable?

Is Joseph instructing them to lie?

7. What does it tell us that Pharaoh himself was going to meet Joseph's family?

In what way has God used Joseph to bring favor to his entire family?

What can we learn from this about our relationship with our families?

How would you define a "white lie"?

Can you think of other examples of "white lies" in the Bible?

Can you think of any time when telling such a lie would be acceptable? Please explain.

What have you learned about God and the way He directs our paths from this episode in Joseph's life?

Genesis 47

1. Now comes the time for the "official" introductions and decisions to be made. What does it tell us about Joseph that he must go to Pharaoh before settling his family in Goshen?

What does Joseph tell Pharaoh?

What instructions did Joseph give to his brothers concerning their meeting with Pharaoh?

2. How many brothers does Joseph take with him?

Why do you think we are not told the names of these brothers?

If you were in Joseph's place, which five brothers would you have taken? Please explain.

3. What question does Pharaoh ask the brothers?

What is their answer?

How do you account for this answer considering Joseph's previous instructions?

Notice, Joseph's brothers make the appeal to Pharaoh, not Joseph. Why?

What do the brothers say to Pharaoh in verse 4?

How do the brothers refer to themselves when speaking to Pharaoh? Why do you think they do this?

4. Pharaoh gives his answer to Jacob, not to the brothers. Why do you think he does this?

What does Pharaoh say to Joseph?

For what special ability do you think Pharaoh is looking?

Finally, Joseph brings his father to meet Pharaoh. What do you think Joseph was feeling as he did this?

What does Jacob do when he is brought before Pharaoh?

Why do you think he does this?

What does it mean that he blessed Pharaoh?

What does Pharaoh ask Jacob?

What is Jacob's answer? What word does Jacob use to describe his life?

In what way has his 103 years been a pilgrimage?

What else does Jacob say about the years of his pilgrimage?

Before leaving Pharaoh, what does Jacob do?

5. According to verse 11, what does Joseph do for his family?

How do you think other Egyptians felt about these Hebrews being given some of the best land in Egypt?

What else does he do for them? (See verse 12.)

How has the famine affected the people of Egypt? Joseph's family?

6. We read in verse 13 that there was no food in the entire region. Why do you think we are just now reading this?

What was the result of the severe famine?

What does it mean to you that Egypt AND Canaan were wasting away?

Now begins an interesting example of Joseph's stewardship. What did Joseph do when the entire area was wasting away?

What did Joseph do with all the money that he collected?

We don't know how much time has passed, but when the people had no more money with which to buy food, what did they do?

What was Joseph's response?

What did the people bring to Joseph in exchange for food?

How long were the people able to buy food this way?

7. After that year the people are once again starving. They have no more money or livestock. What do they have left with which to buy food?

Should Joseph have had compassion upon them at this time? Please explain.

In some countries in the world today where famines are severe, families will sell their children for food. How do you feel about this practice?

To keep from perishing, what are the people of Egypt willing to do?

What does it mean that the people were willing to be in bondage to Pharaoh?

This time, the people ask for more than food. What do they ask of Joseph? (See verse 19.)

How will this help the land from becoming desolate?

8. According to verse 20, what does Joseph do?

What can we learn about Egypt under Pharaoh that the people owned their own land?

What does it mean to you that the Egyptians, one and all, had to sell their land?

What does verse 21 say Joseph did to the people?

What does it mean to you that Joseph reduced the people to servitude?

What other alternate wording can you find for verse 21?

Why might Joseph remove all the people to the cities?

9. According to verse 22, what was the only group that was allowed to keep their land?

Why did they not have to sell their land?

What does this tell us about the religious system of Egypt?

What would be the danger of this practice?

10. How do you feel about Joseph's buying all the people and land for Pharaoh?

Joseph is willing to give the people seed so they can plant the ground. However, what do they have to do when the crop comes in?

Does this seem like a fair arrangement? Please explain.

This next part is interesting. Joseph has taken all their money, livestock, and land. He owns them. Yet, how do they respond in verse 25?

How do you explain this reaction?

Next, Joseph goes one step further. What law did Joseph establish?

How would everyone benefit from such a law?

11. While all of this is taking place, what is happening to the Israelites in Goshen?

So, while everyone else is losing land, the Israelites are acquiring land. How do you explain this?

According to verse 28, how long did Jacob live in Egypt? How old was he?

As his death approached, for whom does Jacob send? Why do you think he did not ask for any other of his sons?

What does Jacob ask Joseph to do for him when Jacob dies?

What does he ask Joseph to do as an oath?

We saw this same practice in chapter 24. What can you learn about it?

Why does Jacob not want to be buried in Egypt?

What did Jacob do after Joseph swore to bury him with his fathers?

What does it mean to you that Jacob worshipped God by leaning on his staff?

12. After reading this account of the famine in Egypt, how would you summarize Joseph's role as Pharaoh's steward?

What can we learn about being God's stewards from Joseph's actions?

What was the name of the Pharaoh when Joseph was first sold into slavery?

What was the name of the Pharaoh when Jacob died?

What does that tell us about Joseph in that he was steward for more than one Pharaoh?

Genesis 48

1. Following a time of relative peace in Joseph's family, what message does Joseph receive?

What do you think Joseph was feeling when he received this message?

Whom did Joseph take with him to visit his father?

Why did he take them with him?

What effect did it have on Jacob when he heard Joseph had come?

2. What is the first thing Jacob said to his son Joseph?

How does he refer to God? Why do you think he used this name?

What does the name God Almighty or El Shaddai mean to you?

What happened to Jacob at Luz?

Why do you think Jacob begins with this aspect of his life?

Can you recall a past event that still helps to strengthen your faith?

3. According to verse 4, what words of God does Jacob recall?

What specific promises are contained in this statement?

How do these promises pertain to Joseph?

4. What does Jacob say next concerning Joseph's two sons?

What does it mean that the two sons will be Jacob's?

If you were Jacob, how would you react to this?

What significance does this hold for Ephraim and Manasseh? (Look again at verse 4.)

Who were Reuben and Simeon?

What is the significance in Jacob's saying that Joseph's two sons will be his just as Reuben and Simeon are his?

5. What does Jacob tell Joseph about any other sons Joseph may have?

What does verse 6 mean to you concerning the future inheritance of Joseph's children?

Next, Jacob gives us a clue as to why he is giving Joseph a double portion. What does he reveal in verse 7?

6. Why do you think Joseph does not recognize Joseph's two sons?

When Jacob learns they are Joseph's children, what does he have Joseph do?

What does Jacob do when the two sons are brought to him?

What emotions is Jacob feeling? (See verse 11.)

7. Following Jacob's show of affection, what does Joseph do?

Joseph now presents his sons to Jacob to be blessed. What does he do?

Why does he place Ephraim on his right and Manasseh on his left?

However, Jacob surprises Joseph. What does Jacob do?

8. With his hands on Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob first blesses Joseph. When he does, Jacob refers to God in three ways. What are these three ways?

What does each of these mean to you?

What was Joseph's blessing?

9. What did Joseph do when he saw what his father was doing?

Why was Joseph displeased?

What does Joseph say to his father?

Why do you think Jacob refused, and what did he mean when he said, "I know, my son, I know"?

What does Jacob tell Joseph concerning the two sons?

How many other times was the younger blessed ahead of the older?

How did Jacob bless Ephraim and Manasseh?

How did he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh?

10. In verse 20, the pronoun "your" is singular. To whom is it referring?

In verse 21, the pronouns "you" and "your" are plural. To whom are they referring?

What does Jacob say to Joseph in verse 21?

Read verse 22 very carefully. What does Jacob mean when he says Joseph is one who is over his brothers? (How do other versions read?)

What does Jacob give to Joseph?

The word for ridge or portion of land is the word "shekem." Why is this significant?

Genesis 49

1. We have talked of this before, but let us revisit the idea of a blessing. What does it mean to you to bless someone?

What does it mean to you to receive a blessing?

From our study of *Genesis*, what is the main purpose of a father's blessing on his sons?

Look back at *Genesis* 27:27-29, which contains Isaac's blessing over Jacob. Even though Isaac believed he was speaking to Esau, the blessing belonged to Jacob. What were the important parts of that blessing?

Look carefully at what Isaac says in verse 29. How many brothers did Jacob have?

Considering this, how do you explain Isaac's words that Jacob is to be lord over his brothers and that the sons of his mother will bow down to him?

What does this blessing have to do with Jacob's sons?

2. After blessing Joseph's sons, what does Jacob tell his other sons?

These blessings are also part prophecy. What does this mean to you?

How would you describe the relationship between a blessing and a prophecy?

3. Jacob speaks first to Reuben. What does he say to Reuben in verse 3?

Based upon this part of the blessing only, how would you be feeling if you were Reuben?

However, things change in verse 4. To what does Israel compare Reuben?

What does it mean to you that Israel compared Reuben to turbulent or uncontrolled water? How would you describe such a person?

What does Reuben's future hold for his family?

What does it mean to you that Reuben will no longer excel?

What is the reason for this prophecy over Reuben?

What does this tell you about the effect of our actions on future generations?

4. Israel speaks next to Simeon and Levi. What do you remember about them?

Israel says that they are brothers, which they are. What do you think is Israel's deeper meaning?

What does Israel say about his two sons in verse 5? Why does he say this?

What does Israel say about them in verse 6?

Why would he not want to be in their council?

What can we learn about seeking advice from Israel's words?

What specific details do we learn about these two brothers in verse 6?

Who is speaking in verse 7? How do we know this?

What does God say He is going to do to these two tribes?

Why would this be a curse?

5. Looking at the blessings so far, what affects have past actions had on the present blessings?

Now, Jacob turns to Judah. What do you remember about Judah?

Based upon Judah's past, what type of blessing would you expect Judah to receive?

However, what is the very first thing Jacob says to Judah?

What does it mean to you that Judah's hand will be on the neck of its enemies?

Look at the last part of verse 8. What else does Jacob say to Judah?

In verse 9, we have a series of metaphors. To what three things does Jacob compare Judah?

What does each of these images mean to you?

Looking at all these images, what conclusions can we draw about Judah?

6. First, Jacob prophesies that Judah will be praised. Next, that Judah will be warlike as a lion. How do explain these seemingly two opposite qualities residing in the same blessing?

Can you think of a descendent of Judah that will be known for both praise and warring?

7. What is a scepter and what does it symbolize?

Some versions read "nor the ruler's staff from between his feet," and others "nor a lawgiver from between his feet." What do these phrases mean to you?

Judah and his brothers would understand that these words would be referring to a future king. If you were Judah, how would such a blessing affect you?

How do you interpret the last two lines of verse 10? (Note, you might want to look at different versions.)

8. Jacob is still not finished. What does verse 11 tell us about Judah?

How would you explain the washing of garments in wine?

How would you explain Jacob's final words in verse 12?

9. Judah's blessing is the first blessing that contains nothing negative. Was this Jacob's doing? Please explain.

10. Following Judah's lengthy blessing, Jacob addresses Zebulun. What does Jacob say about Zebulun?

What is a haven? What is the significance of Zebulun's being a haven for ships?

If you were Zebulun, would you be disappointed with such a blessing? Please explain.

11. Issachar is next. To what does Jacob compare his son Issachar?

What type of donkey or ass is used to describe Issachar?

What positive traits does a donkey have?

What are donkeys most known for? Is this a good thing?

What is the most common use for a donkey?

12. Jacob paints us a picture in verse 14. We have a strong donkey with a heavy burden on each side. What does this donkey do?

To some this may seem like laziness, but to some it signifies patience. Which do you think is the more appropriate interpretation?

Read verse 15. What does this tell us about Issachar?

"Bend his shoulder to the burden" can also be interpreted as being under a yoke. Do you see this as a positive trait? Please explain.

Summarize what this blessing tells us about Issachar.

13. What does the name "Dan" mean?

What does Jacob say about Dan in verse 16?

What would it mean to you if someone said you would provide justice for your people?

The next part of this blessing states that Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path. The viper was the color of the sand and could camouflage itself easily. This made the viper, which had a very poisonous bite, very dangerous. What do you believe this is saying about Dan?

What is Dan capable of doing?

Can you think of a positive application for a dangerous bite causing a rider to tumble backwards?

How do you reconcile Dan's being both a judge and a viper?

The last part of Dan's blessing is in the form of a quote. What does it say?

Samson was from the tribe of Dan. In what ways does Samson reflect this blessing?

14. Gad's blessing is much shorter than others. Does this mean Gad is not as important? Please explain.

What does verse 19 say about Gad?

What does it mean to you that Gad will attack his attackers at their heels?

15. Verse 20 contains Asher's blessing. What does Israel say over this son?

How would you feel receiving this blessing? Please explain.

16. To what is Naphtali compared in verse 21?

The word for "doe" also means gazelle. What does this image tell us about Naphtali?

What does the phrase "doe set free" tell us about this tribe?

The second part of this verse reads differently in some versions. The NIV reads as follows: that bears beautiful fawns. What does this mean to you?

The ASV and KJV read as follows: He giveth goodly words. What does this mean to you?

What can we learn about Naphtali from these two different readings?

17. Now, it is Joseph's turn. To what is Joseph compared in verse 22?

This is a beautiful image. What is contained in the image of a fruitful vine near a spring? What does this tell us about Joseph?

What does the last part of verse 22 mean to you?

18. Verse 23 tells us that archers will attack Joseph. Why will they do this?

In what way has Joseph already seen this truth in his life?

Why might "archers" attack him out of bitterness or envy?

Yet, despite the attacks, what is Joseph able to do in verse 24?

Why is Joseph able to fend off these attackers?

What are the four "names" of God Jacob uses when he blesses his son Joseph?

Why do you think Jacob chose these names?

19. According to verse 25, what type of blessings is Joseph going to receive?

What do these blessings mean to you?

Jacob is not through. How does he finish blessing Joseph in verse 26?

How can these blessings be greater than the blessings of ancient mountains?

What can you tell about Jacob and Joseph's relationship from the language used in verse 26?

20. Look again at Joseph's blessing. How would you summarize what his father spoke over him?

In what way or ways will we see this blessing come true?

Joshua, Deborah, and Samuel all come from the tribe of Joseph. How are they a fulfillment of this blessing?

21. Finally, Jacob gets to Benjamin. To what does he compare Benjamin?

What does this ravenous wolf do?

What does this image tell us about Benjamin?

What would it mean to you to have a brother who was a "ravenous wolf"?

Look at Judges 19 & 20. What do we learn about Benjamin from these chapters? Is Benjamin like a "ravenous wolf"? Please explain.

22. Verse 28 tells us that each of the blessings was appropriate to each brother. What does that mean?

After the blessings, what instructions does Jacob give to his sons?

Why does Jacob want to be buried there?

This "field" near Mamre is considered a very holy site. Who is buried there?

With these blessings, Jacob's life ends, and Joseph, because of his position, is over this family. If you were among the remaining brothers, would you have any reservations? Please explain.

Genesis 50

1. After Joseph finishes mourning for his father, what does he have done?

What does it mean to you that these physicians were in Joseph's service?

What can you learn about the Egyptian's practice of embalming?

How long does it to embalm Jacob?

Following the period for embalming, for how many days did the Egyptians mourn for Joseph?

Why would the Egyptians mourn for Jacob seventy days?

Some scholars say that the standard mourning period for a pharaoh was 72 days. What does it tell us about Jacob that they mourned for him 70 days?

2. After the days of mourning are over, to whom does Joseph make his appeal?

Knowing Joseph's close relationship with Pharaoh, why did he not make his request to Pharaoh in person? (See Esther 4:1-2.)

What does Joseph ask of Pharaoh?

Look carefully at Joseph's words at the end of verse 5. What might be one of Pharaoh's concerns about letting Joseph go?

Why would Pharaoh believe Joseph?

What can we learn from this episode about the importance of our word?

What can we do to so that our word would stand even before a pharaoh?

What is Pharaoh's answer?

3. Look back at Jacob's life, especially chapters 27-31. How would you describe Jacob's reputation during this time?

Now we can see how God had honored Jacob. When Joseph leaves to bury his father, who goes with him?

What does it tell you that ALL of Pharaoh's officials accompanied Joseph?

Can you think of anyone living who would garner such respect?

Who are the only ones not to accompany Joseph when they return to Canaan?

This question is pure speculation. However, based upon verses 7 & 8, how many do you think are in this procession?

4. What is a threshing floor?

What can you learn about the location of Atad, near the Jordan?

Jacob was buried at the cave in Macphelah near Mamre. Can you locate this on a map?

Look at a map. Would a direct route to Mamre have required them to cross the Jordan?

What can we learn about their journey from this?

5. What does Joseph do once they cross the Jordan?

Why does Joseph observe a 7-day mourning period if they already mourned for 70 days in Egypt?

How do they mourn for Jacob?

What conclusion do the Canaanites reach after observing the procession?

What name is given to this place and what does it mean?

6. Verse 12 tells us that Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them. How important is it for your children to obey you? Please explain.

Why do you think his sons did all that Jacob had commanded?

Jesus equates obedience with love. What do you think Jesus meant by this?

After Jacob's burial, they all return to Egypt. We know the brothers have some doubts about Joseph. Do you think they have a choice as to whether they should return to Egypt or not?

7. Joseph's brothers now have some concerns. What is worrying them following the death of their father?

What does it tell us about them that they are still worried about Joseph?

Are their concerns justified? Please explain.

Look carefully at the word they sent to Joseph. What message do they send Joseph?

According to the brothers, what do they tell Joseph were Jacob's wishes?

Do you believe they are telling Joseph the truth? In other words, do you think Jacob said this? Please explain.

If these were Jacob's concerns, why did he not say something to Joseph personally?

8. The brothers' fears tell us much about how difficult it can be to believe we have been forgiven. Have you ever felt like the brothers when you approached God?

Why are the brothers having such a difficult time believing they are truly forgiven?

How was Jacob able to forgive his brothers so completely?

How would you explain God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ?

9. What was Joseph's reaction when he received his brothers' message?

Why do you think Joseph wept?

How do you think Jesus feels when we doubt His forgiveness?

What did his brothers do when they saw Joseph crying? Why do you think they did this?

10. Now comes one of the most amazing statements. What does Joseph tell his brothers in verse 19?

What do you think is the "place of God" to which Joseph refers?

What does Joseph say in verse 20?

What does this statement tell us about God's plans for our lives?

This statement shows a great deal of maturity on Joseph's part. In what way has Joseph grown the most?

Why does Joseph tell his brothers not to be afraid?

Joseph looks at God's plans instead of at his brothers' actions. Doing so helps him forgive them and move on. How can looking at situations from God's perspective help us forgive others?

What does Joseph tell his brothers he will do for them?

How do you think Joseph's words affected his brothers?

11. Joseph lives to be 110. What are some of the things Joseph witnessed in his lifetime?

Look at verse 24. As Joseph nears death, what does he tell his brothers?

How can Joseph be so sure God will come and take them to the promised land?

Joseph will no longer be there to help or protect them. How do you think the brothers were feeling?

What oath does Joseph have his brothers take?

Additional questions

12. What have you learned from this study of Joseph?
13. Many scholars see similarities between the lives of Joseph and Jesus. They say that Joseph is a forerunner of Christ, showing us what was to come. Assuming this to be true, list as many parallels between the lives of Joseph and Jesus.
14. Why would God give us someone like Joseph to point the way to Christ?